THE

SERVICE OF THE POOR;

BEING

AN INQUIRY INTO THE REASONS
FOR AND AGAINST THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGIOUS
SISTERHOODS FOR CHARITABLE PURPOSES.

BY

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ERRATUM.

In p. 287, line 20, *for* p. 204, *read* p. 206.

THE SERVICE OF THE POOR.

INTRODUCTION.

The attempt which has been made of late years to introduce into England a system of religious sisterhoods for charitable purposes, must be a topic of deep personal interest to all women who wish to devote their lives or any great part of their time to the service of the poor. It is with these women that the decision in favour of or against the system ultimately rests; and their decision is a matter of importance not only to themselves and to the poor, but to the whole nation. The incentives to such self-devotion are, however, becoming so increasingly urgent, and the practical difficulties to be encountered in it are so great, that any organization which offers guidance and protection in the work, especially when clothed with the *prestige* of ecclesiastical sanction and romantic associations, is too welcome to be often met with much scrutiny into its remoter action. Yet the more urgent the need for the services of women, the better bestowed in the long run will be any amount of careful and dispassionate inquiry which can be brought to bear upon the real nature of the schemes proposed for rendering them available.

It may, I think, be assumed as granted on all hands that some kind of organization is necessary for providing a supply of trained women for works ot charity, and for directing them when trained in the performance of such works. It is also, I

believe, generally felt that our present provision for such needs is insufficient. In any attempt to increase this provision, the question must arise whether associations for this purpose should be organized upon a religious or upon a secular basis. It is to the right decision of this question that I wish to contribute.

The words "religious" and "secular," though the only appropriate ones, are so liable to misconstruction of a peculiarly undesirable kind, that I must at once define the sense in which they will be used in the course of this work.

By a religious association for charitable purposes I mean an association the organization of which rests upon the assumption that works of charity, including teaching, almsgiving, and the care of the sick, are means to an end; that end being the spiritual benefit of the performer or of the object of such works. From this view follow (invariably, I believe, in practice, if not necessarily in theory) two corollaries: first, that to be in a certain spiritual state, or at least to belong to a certain religious denomination, is an indispensable condition of admission into such an association; and, secondly, that all services being supposed to be rendered gratuitously, no direct payment is received by any of its individual members. Such an association of women is usually described as a "sisterhood," and it is in this sense that I shall use the word "sisterhood" or "religious association."

By a secular association for charitable purposes I mean an association in which works of charity are considered (as regards the organization of the association, whatever may be the views of its individual members) as ultimate ends; and in which, therefore, the only conditions of admission are such as respect the qualifications of the candidate for the work to be undertaken; and the employment of paid or unpaid agents is considered as a question purely of expediency.

It is obviously quite possible for these two kinds of associations to work side by side, but quite impossible for any one association to combine the two characters. Wherever a new charitable association is to be organized, a choice must be made between the two systems; and every woman who wishes to join any association for the service of the poor must decide

into which scale her weight shall be thrown. The object of this work is to explain the considerations by which we ought to be guided in making that choice.

Works of charity may be roughly divided into the three branches of teaching, nursing, and almsgiving. The question between religious and secular institutions in England is in a different state with regard to each of these three branches.

In the case of teaching, it may be said to have been practically decided in favour of secular institutions, so far as regards the provision made for training teachers, though the denominational character of most schools for the poor makes the profession of some particular form of religious belief by teachers in most cases necessary as a qualification for employment. The subject of charitable education is so large a one, and its discussion would require so much technical knowledge of a kind which I do not possess, that I shall not attempt to deal with it. It is the less necessary to do so as most of the arguments for and against the employment of sisterhoods as nurses are equally applicable to their employment as teachers.

The question is under full discussion with reference to nursing, and it is as offering a means of supplying a better system of nursing that sisterhoods are most strongly advocated, and seem most likely to gain favour here; and this is the branch of the service of the poor with which I shall be chiefly concerned.

The whole subject of relief is in such a chaotic state at present that the time can scarcely be said to have arrived for deciding in favour of any one system for administering it. But the difficulties of that subject, as they are increasingly felt, impart an increasing interest to the general question of the right method of organizing charitable associations.

Two things are especially wanted to enable those with whom the choice lies to make it wisely. First, a fuller knowledge of the facts of the case; and, secondly, a clearer understanding of the questions at issue, and of their relations to each other. What I have to say will be divided accordingly into two parts, of which the plan is briefly as follows:—

PART I.—In order to supply illustrations of my meaning, and to throw some light on what may be called the natural

history of religious associations, I have given a short account of five ancient and modern sisterhoods. I have taken my illustrations from Continental rather than English sources, because the system must be considered as still on its trial in England. We have various sisterhoods already at work, but there is no one sufficiently wide-spread or long-established to justify me in selecting it as a representative of the rest, nor, I think, can any such association be considered as having yet obtained anything like a national recognition and acceptance.[1] Three of my illustrations are ancient or mediæval institutions; the other two comparatively modern, one Catholic and one Protestant, each of which has spread rapidly, and may be said to have taken root among the popular institutions of its native country. These five sisterhoods are—(1) the Deaconesses of the Primitive Church; (2) the Béguines; (3) the Third Order of St. Francis; (4) the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paule; and (5) the Deaconesses of modern Germany. The grounds on which I have chosen these institutions as representative specimens are respectively as follows:—

(1.) The precedent to which those who wish for the introduction into England of a system of Protestant Sisters of Charity most naturally turn, is that of the Deaconess system lately established in Germany, of which there is already a small branch in England; and the promoters of that system, both in Germany and in England, lay so much stress upon the fact of its being, as they contend, a revival of the Apostolical institution of a "Female Diaconate," that it seems necessary to a fair understanding of their objects and claims to inquire exactly what is known respecting the Deaconesses of the Primitive Church. For the sake of preserving chronological order I separate this chapter from that upon the later Deaconesses: the relation between the two is not such as to make this separation in any way inconvenient.

So much emulation has long been excited by the example of the comparatively modern charitable sisterhoods of the Roman

[1] It appears from the Kalendar of the English Church for 1870 that there are at least thirty such institutions in England, but the largest does not, I believe, number more than eighty sisters.

Catholic Church, that it seemed instructive to choose three of the most celebrated, and most distinct in type, of those sisterhoods, and to study their original organization, their history, and present state. For this purpose I have chosen (2) the Béguines, on account of the extreme freedom and simplicity of their manner of life; (3) the Third Order of St. Francis, on account of the historical interest attached to the Order, and as representing the principle of religious association apart from life in a community; and (4) the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paule, on account of their wide reputation, and of their having been instituted for the very purposes for which we are supposed to need sisters in England.

(5.) The Deaconesses of modern Germany afford the one great instance of a successful attempt to establish a system of Protestant sisterhoods for charitable purposes, and are therefore specially interesting with regard to England.

As an instance of what may be done by a purely secular institution in that branch of charitable work which is supposed most peculiarly to demand a religious organization, and for purposes of reference, I have given a short account of the Training Institution for Nurses at Liverpool, and of the system of district nursing established in that town in connection with it.

I have also given a short account of those differences between the French system of administering public charity and our own, and between the French hospital system and our own, which appear to me to bear upon the employment of sisterhoods on any large scale, either as teachers, almoners, or nurses.

I have never had any personal connection with any of the associations of which I shall have to speak. The point of view from which I regard the subject is that external one from which the decision of this important question must practically be made.

The sources from which I have taken these accounts will be given in each case. My object has been to give on the best authority a statement of facts, in considerable detail but without comment, merely in order to supply information, and

reserving all expression of opinion for the second part of my work.

PART II.—Having thus supplied the best materials I can collect towards the formation of a right judgment on the facts of the case, I shall next try to disentangle and to answer the different questions which are generally mixed up in the argument on either side. I shall attempt to show what are the real wants met by sisterhoods, to what extent the same wants may be effectually met by the organization of corresponding institutions on a secular basis, and what are the reasons for endeavouring to do so.

The question whether a system of religious sisterhoods ought to be promoted may be considered with reference either to the interests of the poor or to the interests of the women to be employed in their service. But there is a third aspect of the question, which, though less obvious, is at least as important; namely, that which regards the interests of society at large.

This part of my argument therefore will consist of three chapters. In the first, I shall inquire into the nature of those wants of the poor which charitable sisterhoods are intended to meet, in order that we may be in a position to judge what qualifications in individuals and what organization in associations are required for supplying them.

In the second, I shall describe what seem to me to be the principal motives which impel charitable women to enter into sisterhoods, and the way in which that step affects their interests, in order that we may understand what are the reasonable demands for which we have to provide, if we would secure the full benefit of their devotion to the public service.

In the third, I shall try to show what are the mutual duties of society at large, and of charitable single women, with regard to the service of the poor; to suggest some arrangements by which the necessary work may be effectually done, without having recourse to sisterhoods; and to explain the reasons for which, upon public grounds, I think we ought to prefer such arrangements.

If it were possible to prove both that certain evils were

inseparable from sisterhoods, and that the good done by them could be done as effectually by secular institutions, the question might for the present be considered as practically decided in favour of secular institutions; for the only ground on which religious sisterhoods have any appreciable chance of general acceptance in this time and country is their supposed usefulness. I am, however, quite aware that this is by no means the only ground on which they can be defended, nor is it really their strongest hold upon human nature. A belief in the intrinsic beauty and holiness of what is technically called "the religious life" is at the root of a great deal of the admiration which is bestowed upon Sisters of Charity for the performance of works which excite no particular emotion when performed by paid agents. According to my definition of a sisterhood its object is twofold, and the arguments in favour of sisterhoods partake of this twofold character. It is often said, and not often disputed, vague and inaccurate as is the assertion in its usual form, that the service of the poor is a work demanding such zeal, devotion, and self-sacrifice, that it cannot be rightly done except from the highest religious motives. Upon the obviously unwarrantable assumption that religious motives are identical with religious organization, this is an intelligible, if not a valid, argument in favour of the employment of sisterhoods in the service of the poor. I have already explained the plan upon which I propose to analyse and discuss that argument. But, as I have said, those who promote these associations are not satisfied with the mere performance of works of charity, but regard them as means to an end; that end being the spiritual benefit of the poor and of the sisters themselves. The question whether the establishment of sisterhoods does indeed promote that end, really outweighs all the considerations of temporal utility under which it may be veiled. The answer to it obviously depends upon our belief respecting some of the deepest and most important questions upon which opinions can be divided. The last chapter of this work will be devoted to showing what these questions are, and how they are connected with the practical controversy. I have no intention of entering upon

the discussion of any such questions. I aim only at showing how our choice between religious and secular institutions ought to be determined by our belief respecting them. Those who have not only deliberately adopted opposite conclusions upon them, but also clearly recognized their bearing upon the schemes under discussion, will no doubt always continue to take opposite sides with regard to those schemes. I have no hope of influencing those whose opinion is thus deeply and advisedly opposed to my own. But the subject is so complicated, and is at the same time one which appeals so strongly to feeling, that many people take part for or against religious sisterhoods without having fully considered what are the theories upon which they really rest, and what are the consequences which the adoption of those theories involves. My hope is to show what those theories are, and to make clear their connection with the practical questions at issue between the promoters and the opposers of sisterhoods. If I can succeed in this object, some of my readers may discover from a fuller consideration than they have hitherto given to the whole subject, that the side to which their sympathies incline them is not that on which their deepest convictions would justify them in enlisting themselves.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

DEACONESSES OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

I HAVE neither the power nor the wish to make independent historical inquiries respecting the Primitive Church. That task, as regards the institution of Deaconesses, appears to have been performed with sufficient fulness by Dr. Howson and Mr. Ludlow,[1] to whose works I have always been referred by the advocates of the Deaconess system in England to whom I have applied for information. I have no reason to doubt either the accuracy or the fairness of their statements, and I propose merely to give a short abstract of the facts which they have collected from various sources respecting these women, of whom Mr. Ludlow's work gives the fullest account I have seen.

How scanty those sources of information are appears from the following passages from "Woman's Work in the Church." Speaking of the Western branch of the Church, Mr. Ludlow says (p. 63): "We cannot fail to be struck by the almost total absence of all mention of the female diaconate as a living institution, still more of individual Deaconesses, in the writings of the Latin Fathers. . . . In the great Latin Fathers of the 4th and 5th centuries, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, the contemporaries of Basil, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, scarcely a word is to be found on the subject." Further on he says (p. 65): "The female diaconate, confounded with Church widowship, suddenly makes its appearance under its own name in the decrees of Gaulish councils of the 5th and 6th centuries, but invariably to be denounced and prohi-

1 "Deaconesses," by the Rev. J. S. Howson, D.D. (Longman, 1862.) "Woman's Work in the Church," by John Malcolm Ludlow. (A. Strahan, London, 1865.)

bited." With regard to the Eastern Church, he says (p. 23): "Except in the 'Apostolical Constitutions,' up to the latter end of the 4th century, there is little of real moment, less of real interest, to be found in Eastern Church writers respecting our subject." And speaking of the first half of the 6th century, he says (p. 60): "From this period I am aware of but two or three scattered notices as to the female diaconate in the East."

Such information as is to be had on the subject, appears to come from three principal sources: (1) the "Apostolical Constitutions;" (2) the writers of the Eastern Church between the latter end of the 4th and the middle of the 6th centuries; and (3) the regulations respecting Deaconesses which were made from time to time in either branch of the Church by the civil powers or by ecclesiastical councils.

(1.) An account of the controversy respecting the genuineness of the "Apostolical Constitutions," and of their evidence on the subject of Deaconesses, is given in an appendix to Dr. Howson's work on "Deaconesses."

The sum of Dr. Howson's account of the controversy respecting the date and authorship of the "Apostolical Constitutions," is that, though "largely interpolated from corrupt sources and from later periods," a very large part of them is probably anti-Nicene, and that they give us "what may be called a picture of the Church of the first three centuries—a picture distorted, doubtless, and in many places retouched—but still a picture which is a moderately good likeness on the whole."

The result of Mr. Ludlow's and Dr. Howson's extracts from and investigations of the "Apostolical Constitutions" (a result which is to some extent confirmed, and certainly in no way contradicted, by the incidental notices of Deaconesses which they have extracted from other writings) is that from very early times there had existed in the Christian Church a class of women holding a "semi-ecclesiastical position," with the title of Deaconesses; that their business was to keep order in the women's part of the churches, to assist at the baptism of female converts, to serve as a medium of communication between the

bishops and the female members of their congregation, and to take a part in the charitable ministrations of the Church—*i.e.* in teaching, almsgiving, and the care of the sick; and that they were formally set apart for their office by a ceremony appointed for that purpose, including imposition of hands and the use of a prayer, which is quoted at length by Dr. Howson from the "Apostolical Constitutions."

(2.) From the Greek Fathers of the 5th and 6th centuries Mr. Ludlow extracts various passages, in which mention is made of several individual Deaconesses, of one of whom only do we get anything like a full account. This exception is Olympias, the friend of Chrysostom, whom Dr. Howson describes as "the queenly figure among the Deaconesses of the Primitive Church," while Mr. Ludlow (after giving copious extracts from Chrysostom's letters to her, full of the most hyperbolical compliments upon her piety and self-mortification, shown among other things by her having brought upon herself such a swarm of diseases as to confound the physician's skill, and, according to another contemporary, by her abstaining from animal food, and going for the most part unwashed) says of what he truly calls "this most painful picture," that it shows us "how far" the female diaconate in the Greek Church had by this time "departed from the model of the Apostolic times."

(3.) From the Theodosian Code, and from the Novels of Justinian, Mr. Ludlow extracts some scattered but significant regulations concerning Deaconesses. These are (1) "a stringent law of mortmain, if we may so call it," which appears to have applied to the Deaconesses and Church widows only, not to the male clergy, and which was soon afterwards repealed, and followed at a later period by the re-enactment of a former provision, by which the property of clerical persons, whether men or women, including monks and solitaries, who died intestate and without next of kin, was to go to the church or monastery to which they had been attached; and still later by an enactment that when property was left on condition of marriage, the condition should become void on the legatee becoming a clergyman or a deaconess, provided he or she spent or left the property to pious uses. (2) Various regula-

tions as to the age at which Deaconesses might be ordained, a point which appears to have been long in dispute between the Church and the State, and which was finally settled in favour of the Church, by the age being fixed at forty instead of sixty, as had been done in 438 by the Theodosian Code; and (3) penalties against the marriage of Deaconesses, and for the protection of their honour. In the Sixth Novel of Justinian (A.D. 535) the penalty for the marriage of a Deaconess is pronounced to be death to both parties, and confiscation of all their property—that of the Deaconess to the Church, that of her husband to the State.

The notices quoted by Mr. Ludlow and Dr. Howson from ecclesiastical councils do not add much to our knowledge; they consist chiefly of regulations concerning the age of appointment of Deaconesses, excommunications against those who married, and in the French Church, from the 6th century downwards, regulations prohibiting the ordination of Deaconesses.

With regard to the cessation of the office, Dr. Howson says that "the institution generally ceased in the West about the 6th century, whereas it continued in the East till the 12th;" which he considers as "some confirmation" of his view that "the system of free Deaconesses gave way before the more rigid religious orders" (p. 51).

Mr. Ludlow concludes, "that the extinction of the office in the West must have nearly coincided with that great victory of the Romish system in the 11th century," the enforcement of the celibacy of the clergy by Gregory VII. Bingham ("Ecclesiastical Antiquities") also says that in the West the order continued till the 10th or 11th century; while they both agree with Dr. Howson in fixing the 12th century for the period of its extinction in the East.

Thus slight and liable to various, if not conflicting, interpretations are our only contemporary records of the female diaconate of the early Church. At what exact date, and by whom, the office was first instituted,—to what extent its organization was defined,—what is the precise distinction between the Deaconesses and the Church widows of very early and

Church virgins of later times,—with what degree of strictness these names were reserved for formally appointed holders of the offices in question,—what were the causes and circumstances of the gradual disuse and final extinction of the office of Deaconess,—are all questions to which the answers are uncertain and disputed, if indeed they can be answered at all. Whether, according to Dr. Howson's view, it "gave way before," or, as Mr. Ludlow says, it "was lost and stifled in," or whether it merged in, grew into, or simply for a time co-existed with, the monastic system, there can be no doubt that the nuns and Sisters of Charity of the Church of Rome, as well as the Protestant Deaconesses of modern times, are in some sense the successors of the Deaconesses of the early Church. The two systems were certainly both in existence in very early times, and the functions discharged by their members were in a great measure identical. Which system is best entitled to trace its descent from apostolic times, and what during their contemporary existence may have been the precise distinctions between them, in respect of their organization, their primary object, their manner of life, and their place in public opinion, are questions which it does not seem to me either possible or worth while to attempt fully to answer now.

CHAPTER II.

THE BÉGUINES.

My account of this very remarkable institution is taken from a posthumous Latin work by Mosheim,[1] called "De Beghardis et Beguinabus" (Leipsic, 1679), referred to by Mr. Ludlow in "Woman's Work in the Church." I need do little more than extract and abridge alternately.

The name Béguine (under several varieties of form) belonged to the members of certain societies which in the 13th century were established in great numbers all over Northern Europe, and of which several (among others the well-known institutions at Ghent and Bruges) still exist. The place and date of their origin and the name of their founder are unknown. The subject has been much disputed, and all that seems to be clearly ascertained is that there was at least one béguinage at Vilvorden in Flanders as early as 1065; that the Béguines were but a small and obscure sect until the end of the 12th century, when a large béguinage was established at Nivelles, by Lambert le Bègue (who is supposed by many people to have been the original founder of the order), from which in the 13th century they spread all over Europe, so that "from the middle of the century onwards there was scarcely a city of any note throughout France, Germany, and the Netherlands which had not its béguinage" (Eccl. Hist. vol. ii. p. 582). Their whole history is very much complicated and confused by the circumstance that the names Béguine and Beghard were loosely applied not only to the persons to whom they especially belonged, but to all those who made any unusual profession of piety; so that,

[1] I am indebted for the translation of this work to the kind assistance of a friend.

as Mosheim says, the word came to be equivalent to "Pietist" or Methodist. He says that as many as thirty sects might be mentioned, "differing greatly in their sentiments, institutions, and practice," the members of which were all called by these names. It is not even clear whether the name (used in this sense) did not exist before the establishment of any of the sisterhoods to which it was in course of time appropriated; and from the time when these sisterhoods became at all numerous, the ambiguity of the name seems to have been a source of confusion even to their contemporaries, and to have exposed the Béguines to a good deal of undeserved reproach and persecution. Rapidly as they seem to have gained ground in public favour, they also excited from the very beginning a great deal of opposition. There were obvious reasons for dislike and jealousy towards them on the part of the priests, the regular monastic orders, and the laity. Many of the sects comprehended under the common names of Beguini or Beguinæ and Beghardi held heretical opinions. They were also accused, with how much justice it is difficult to say, of various scandals in their manner of living. Edicts for their suppression were issued by the Popes Clement V. and John XXII., the execution of which was entrusted to the Inquisition. This was the beginning of a long series of persecutions, which it is happily not necessary for me to follow, but in the course of which all the brotherhoods and most of the sisterhoods were suppressed, their houses disposed of for other purposes, and they themselves in great numbers driven, by fear and other reasons, to adopt the rule of some recognized monastic order—in most cases the 3rd rule of St. Francis. I am chiefly concerned with the constitution of the Béguine sisterhoods during what Mosheim calls their golden age, the 13th century; and this I will now describe.

The original object of these sisterhoods was avowedly not the performance of works of charity, but mutual protection and the cultivation of spiritual perfection. Mosheim says (De Beghardis, p. 101), speaking of the Beguinæ, properly so called, that "they are either widows or virgins who, from desire of gaining eternal salvation, have said good-bye to the pleasures of

life and fashions of the world, and give up what time they can possibly spare from work to prayer, to meditation on divine things, to pious conversation and religious duties, and show their quiet spirit by a veil and simple dress, reserving to themselves, however, the liberty to marry, and return to their former manner of life, if circumstances induce them to do so." In the earliest society of this kind of which we have any detailed information, viz. that which was founded at Nivelles about the year 1226, they appear at first to have had no mistress and no common dwelling, but to have been scattered through the town, "showing their piety of mind by their dress, their language, and constant attendance at public worship." This was the case in many towns. Béguinages were established to receive the women who had already adopted the dress, practices, and name of Beguinæ, while living each at her own home. "However," says Mosheim, "when a home for Beguinæ had been founded in a town, it was not necessary for all to go into it who had devoted themselves to this mode of life. Their order did not demand a community of goods and life, like other religious societies; and the buildings were not constructed in order that the Beguinæ, like nuns, might be excluded from the society of men, and solely obey the will of others, but only in order that the poor among them might be assisted, and all live more decently and conveniently for discharging those duties which the method of a more perfect life required; therefore most of those who had taken the name and dress of Beguinæ, and followed their manner of living, either continued to live in their own houses, or stayed in the house of relations; but by continual going to the house of the Beguinæ, and frequenting prayers and meetings, showed that they were united to them by the bond of a common sisterhood. But the vices of mankind, who generally abuse liberty, compelled some of the Bishops to put an end to this custom before the end of the 13th century. For many women outside the colleges only joined them to enjoy their reputation and their privileges, and thus increased their private property to the detriment of the State. Therefore, in some places, whoever wished to be considered and called

Beguinæ were ordered all of them to go to public dwellings set apart for these women; but in other places all who wanted to stay in private houses were forbidden to wear the dress of Beguinæ, and compelled to pay taxes." These regulations were not carried out everywhere, "for it is certain that in later times, both in Belgium and Germany, numbers of women, although they followed the manner of life of the Beguinæ and claimed the name, would not go into their public dwellings, and were not prevented from retaining their rights and living where they liked." When common dwellings were set apart for them, the manner of life was, with slight variations in different places, generally as follows. The persons admitted were either widows or maidens of blameless character. There was at first no age fixed for admission. Even children might be admitted and clothed in the dress of the Beguinæ; but they were not called sisters, nor did they make any engagement with the sisterhood until they reached the age of fourteen. As, however, it was found in course of time that "it was difficult to keep these younger Beguinæ within the bounds of duty in the state of liberty which they enjoyed," the age of admission was afterwards in some places fixed at forty. "Those who were elected to the order of sisters promised to the mistress of the sisterhood, by giving the right hand, obedience and chastity, but neither of them perfect or perpetual, for they were able to leave the sisterhood and to marry if they pleased; and they managed their property at their own pleasure, with the exception of their external manner of life, which was obliged to be arranged according to the laws of the society, of which laws the mistress was the guardian. All those who broke their promise and were either troublesome to the sisters by quarrelling, or departed from the reverence due to the mistress, or behaved indecorously, or stained their character by other faults of any kind, were corrected by imprisonment and other penalties appointed by the tutors and curators of the society; and if they could not be corrected by these punishments, they were expelled from the sisterhood in disgrace, and with the loss of the property they had brought, without any hope of returning. Especially severe was the censure of those who had allowed

themselves to be seduced, or committed any offence approaching this; and as soon as the offence was proved, they were expelled from the house without any pity or delay." All the sisters on their admission were clothed with the dress of the society—a plain gown of some dark colour, like that usually worn by respectable women, but coarse and without ornament, and a white veil. Mosheim gives at length the laws of a béguinage at Strasburg, from which it appears that these sisters had a sort of novitiate of a year, and did not usually adopt the dress or take the vow until the end of that time; but as the vow was merely a promise of chastity and obedience during the time they remained in the béguinage, and left them perfectly free to leave it whenever they thought fit, the only difference between the novices and the professed sisters seems to have been a pecuniary one.

A novice "was allowed to leave, with all the property she brought, after paying a moderate price to the society for her board during the year. But whoever persevered in her intention till the close of the year, was clothed in the proper dress of the Beguinæ, with a solemn ceremony, in the presence no doubt of the *curator*, and promised obedience to the laws, to the mistress and her deputy. The initiated did not lose the power of afterwards leaving the college if they liked, but, with the exception of a small sum, they were not able to take away with them any of the property they had brought. I do not doubt that this harsh and most troublesome law often caused complaints and disputes. Also, they were bound to have good reasons for their desire to leave the sisterhood; three of which only are mentioned, for those who did not wish to die among the Beguinæ were obliged to go to *reclusorium carceris*, or to some honest society, or finally to some nunnery." The first of these Mosheim interprets to mean that, aspiring to "greater virtue and holiness," they "shut themselves up in a little hut in which to spend the rest of their lives in prayer and meditation;" and the second as a euphemism for marriage, "which the Beguinæ, lest they should seem immodest and full of the hope of a husband, scrupled to mention openly." It does not appear whether the practice of a year's novitiate was universal. The

size of the communities varied from three or four sisters to "some thousands." "In Germany and France one house for the most part, divided into as many cells as there were sisters in the community, held them all; but those who dwelt thus had a common refectory and dormitory. It was different in Belgium, where the Béguinages, as they were called, consisted of as many separate houses as there were women dwelling in the Béguinage, and therefore resembled small towns divided into streets and squares." Those sisters who could afford it were expected "to build themselves a dwelling at their own expense, of which house and all its furniture at their death the sisterhood was heir-at-law." "Many, however, who desired this kind of life had not enough means to build houses; therefore it was allowed to those who had houses of their own to admit one or two fellow-lodgers."

The earlier and smaller Béguinages were generally built near to some church or monastery, where they could attend public worship and go to confession; but, as they grew larger, they began to have chapels of their own, and chaplains were appointed to them. "Precautions, however, were taken that the ordinary priests, called parish priests, should not lose many of their emoluments and rights; for each of the Beguinæ used every year to send to the man who performed the duties of the parish priest a small sum of money for remuneration, and thus to enrol their names as it were among the sheep of his flock. Their chaplain had to pay to the parish priest half those presents made at the funerals of the sisters which are called oblations." The patron of the parish church was generally also the patron of the chapel of the Béguinage.

Each Béguinage had its "mistress," "a lady of the highest reputation, advanced age, and tried character, ... to whom another sister, called the sub-mistress or sub-prioress, generally gave assistance. In the larger Béguinages, which included some thousands, one mistress was not enough; some therefore had two or more. In that at Brussels, which was the largest in Belgium, they had four chief mistresses, called *magistræ capitales*, to whom were added, if I am right, the same number

of sub-mistresses. The mistresses were elected by the votes of the sisters . . . . but the Bishop or his deputy had the power of either approving or, if she seemed unfit, rejecting the mistress elected. The power and authority of the mistress was not very extensive. The obedience which the sisters owed her was not such as is promised by maidens dedicated to God ; and so they only took care that modesty and religion generally, tranquillity, and the customs of the sisterhood were properly observed : all else was left to the will of the sisters. If anything of greater importance affecting the general interests occurred, if any purchase or sale seemed requisite for the general good, if any change or repair of the public buildings was called for, if any additional alteration had to be made in the laws and customs, if new men or women servants were to be hired, if any new members were to be admitted, or any such contingency arose, the tutors and curators of the college were to be assembled, and the proper measures decided upon after general consultation. For, indeed, to the mistress in every place a man of wisdom and virtue was added to share in the government, whose judgment and opinion was always to be taken in affairs of importance; and where there were several mistresses, there were also more curators or tutors. In many sisterhoods, especially the smaller ones, the same person who was the guardian and physician of their souls was also the tutor of the society, with whose consent the laws could be repealed or altered. In other places the duty of curator and tutor at once was administered by the person to whom the Bishop had devolved his power over the Beguinæ, who indeed was generally either the prefect of some monastery, or the dean of some sacred college, or the judge of the episcopal court. The greater colleges chose for themselves their *magistros*, or administrators of the community, from the honourable men of the city, and persons illustrious either by worth or character, choosing as many as the interests of the sisterhood seemed to require, subject to confirmation by the Bishop. Often the patrons of this society—the noblemen who had founded the college, who had enriched it with dwellings, gardens, lands, &c., of their own property—took of their own right the guardianship of it, and transferred this

guardianship, if they liked, to one of their dependants as a benefice. In other cities the magistrates named some of their own class to assist with help and advice the mistress of the Beguinæ; and almost everywhere—since these women were not properly religious, and not admitted among the subjects of the Church by the authority of the Pope—the civil magistrate claimed the chief power over them and their houses and goods, and contended that the care and custody of these colleges, as of all others in the state, belonged to themselves, in spite of the opposition of the Bishops. And this gave rise to frequent quarrels between the Bishops and civil magistrates about trying causes of the Beguinæ. The magistrates allowed the Bishop or his vicar to settle causes which arose in the homes themselves, which were generally slight and of no importance, and to punish the Beguinæ with imprisonment and other penalties when they offended against the laws of the Society. They also allowed the Bishop to deprive mistresses who offended and did not discharge their duty, and to manage other affairs of the same kind. But when there was any dispute with other citizens, or any crime committed, they wished them to be tried in their own courts. In the same way they contended that the whole sisterhood ought to obtain from them the ratification of legal transactions, and that the mistresses and tutors should give an account to them if they required it; and since the Bishops wished to have power over all these matters as well, it could not but happen that intricate disputes often arose between them and the civil magistrates about the Beguinæ, which never were nor could be so arranged that the fuel of discord should be altogether extinguished."

The sisters retained not only the power of leaving the Béguinage whenever they pleased, but the management of their own property while in it. "They might acquire property, enjoy that which they had already, inherit legacies, make wills." They had at first no common purse for food or clothing. Those who had not independent means worked for their own support, generally at weaving; and only the sick poor among the sisters were supported at the public expense. "No one was allowed to beg, unless it happened that the sisterhood,

being in great poverty, could not relieve the needy sisters, and no rich kind people could be found who would come to their assistance. This, however, rarely happened. For the Beguinæ could not easily lack the love and goodwill of pious men, if they had not alienated goodwill by licence or by their vices, and strove to please by a chaste character and religious life. The gifts which people, both in their lifetime and on their death, used to send and bequeath in great abundance to these women in order to have the benefit of their prayers, belonged to the poor who had no property and no patrimony; and so old wills, which have been brought to light at the present time in great numbers by learned men, leaving the Beguinæ heirs to some portion of the property, generally add the word 'poor' Beguinæ, by which they exclude from the legacy all those who do not want the liberality of others to help them to an honest living. But in many houses, especially in German houses, there was no account taken of the condition of the sisters, but all had an equal share in donations, and a double portion was due to the mistress. The income, therefore, of the property which the Beguinæ possessed, was solely applied to restoring and enlarging their churches and buildings, to support the male and female servants, and for the sustenance of the wretched, the poor, the sick, and the old. The property of the Belgian hostelries, as they call them, which were generally very large, was divided into property of the infirmary and property of the church. In most instances the infirmary was the same as the hospital; but in others there was this difference, that the hospital was for strangers and guests, and the infirmary only for sisters who were ill. Out of the property of the infirmary payments were made, and food and wages were supplied to the chaplains, to poor people, to men and maid servants," and necessary repairs were made; "out of the church property all that was required for divine worship, the building and ornaments of the church, was provided; . . . this latter property was more sacred, and administered with greater care, than the former."

In some sisterhoods, probably more generally in later times, as they became richer and approximated more to the type of

ordinary convents, there was a common fund for food and clothing, and the sisters gave up all their property on entrance. This was the case in the Béguinages of Strasburg, from the laws of which some quotations have already been given, and which were under the direction of the Dominican friars. "This community of goods no doubt excited in the sisters the desire of increasing their general stock in order to be equal to bearing the expenses which this required, and produced that very memorable law by which all are excluded from the sisterhood who had deprived themselves of the right of inheriting from relations. 'We are not willing that any one should be received who in her secular state cannot succeed, for any reason whatsoever, to her paternal or maternal estate or to other property, however acquired or derived.' This law, therefore, evidently was passed in order that all that the sisters had at the time, or could ever hope for, might be claimed by the sisterhood, which greed for increasing their property I consider by no means the least reason of that great hatred felt by many against the Beguinæ." In another place, speaking of the causes of the opposition which the system excited from its very commencement, Mosheim says:—"It is incredible what a number of maidens adopted" this manner of life "against the will of their parents. And if they had renounced their goods and inheritances as nuns do, reserving only for themselves a certain interest, no doubt their conduct would have been very acceptable to their brothers, sisters, and relations. But all the Beguinæ retained the management of their own property, the hope of inheritance, the power of giving and making wills, which rights they were obliged to use, and did use, very much otherwise than as their relations wished. For they were bound by law (*debebant jure*) to bequeath half their goods to the Béguinage. The other half most of them used to give either to the priests who were their directors or to their friends of either sex, whose bond of union with them was not relationship but piety, or else to give it away to the poor; and how much odium and hatred this one custom must have brought upon the whole tribe, no one is so ignorant of human nature as not fully to perceive. The rules of the Beguinæ of Ham-

burg, passed in 1360, by Godfrey, Archbishop of Bremen, with which the laws of other sisterhoods of the kind agree, lay down the following injunctions:—'A sister when ill can make a will about half her property; but the other half of her property, whether in money or in other possessions, in the convent or out, after her death will belong to the convent for the repair and preservation of the buildings; and let the sisters take care, on the penalty of the loss of their souls, not to commit any fraud or deceit in this matter.'" By such means, as well as through benefactions and legacies from without, (which were so frequent that, as Mosheim says, "it was not easy for any rich man to die without giving a legacy in his last will and testament to the poor Beguinæ,") and by the exemption from taxation which they enjoyed in many places, the sisterhoods must have accumulated considerable wealth. "The profits of the possessions which had come to any sisterhood, either by chance or intention, they did not spend upon their own comforts, but employed in cherishing, refreshing, and taking care of the sick, strangers, the wretched and the miserable . . . Whilst by their own industry they obtained necessaries for themselves, ... to all the houses of the Beguinæ, as soon as they got settled, hospitals were added, in which the old, the sick, and the weak were cherished and supported by the labour and love of the sisters, and were sustained against the force of their misfortunes until they either died or recovered their health. . . . . Upon this affection for the unhappy and deserted was spent the greater part of the income which the Beguinæ received from property either given to them or brought by them —the principal part, I say, for some was devoted to the church and the ministers of the church."

Their time, as we have already seen, was at their own disposal; at least, so much of it as remained after attendance at certain daily prayers; "many besides used to repeat, day by day, certain forms of prayer and hymns in their own rooms, and to read a portion of some good book recommended by their chaplain. The time that was left free from these duties they were allowed to spend as they pleased;" and that much of it was, in point of fact, spent in works of charity, although there was no rule of the

Society binding them to make that use of it, is quite clear; "not a few from pious motives freely offered their assistance to the afflicted, the sick, and the dying; and in many cities in Germany the custom prevailed of sending to the Beguinæ for attendants and guardians of the sick and poor; for, of course, these women were accustomed to such sad offices in their own dwellings, and besides were considered so experienced in sacred things that they cheered and encouraged timid and dejected minds better than the priests themselves." They had a great reputation for "chastity, modesty, prudence, and piety, which produced, among many other advantages to themselves, this chief one, that they were called in to advise on doubtful and difficult matters, and many persons chose wives from among them." Their command of leisure is mentioned by Mosheim as one of the causes which laid them especially open to the influence of the mystical sects—the Brethren of the Free Spirit, and others—with which they became mixed up both in fact and in public opinion, and whose fate they in a great measure shared during the persecutions of the 14th and following centuries. "It does not seem very surprising that these masters of an abstruse piety should have found entrance especially easily amongst these women. For, not to speak of the frailty and imbecility of the sex itself, there was far easier access to the dwellings of the Beguinæ, which were not bolted and barred, than to a convent of maidens dedicated to God, while the Beguinæ themselves, not being tied down by vows or stated hours of prayer, were able to pay attention to people of this kind more conveniently and for a greater length of time than nuns." The teaching of the mystical Beghardi "seemed in great harmony with the character and order of these women, who all wished to appear to have entered upon their kind of life in order to feed their minds in more tranquillity on the contemplation of heavenly things, and as a matter of fact they spent no small portion of their time in reading the books of the mystics and imbibing their precepts."

These Brethren of the Free Spirit, whose views the Beguinæ were accused of imbibing, were also called Beghardi and Beguini; and it seems to have been even in their own times impossible to distinguish them from the more sober-minded

brotherhoods of the same name; the more heretical sects, however, were generally vagrants and mendicants. One of their principal doctrines was that men may even in this life become so closely united to God as to be incapable of sin, do what they may; and that this state of impeccability is to be attained by persevering contemplation. The attractiveness and the danger of such views to women living after the manner of the Beguinæ, as well as the manner in which the whole order, whether really holding any such opinions or not, might naturally become involved in the reproach and the persecutions which attended them, are sufficiently obvious; and, as I have said, it is not necessary to my purpose to enter into any detailed inquiry into the history of the decay of the system. The ambiguity of the name Béguine makes it very difficult to trace the degree of alteration which probably took place even in the Netherlands from the original type. Even before the persecutions, many of the sisterhoods, having put themselves under the direction of Dominican or Franciscan friars, had more or less approximated to the type of those orders, by adopting a community of goods and habits of mendicancy.

There are still a few Béguinages in existence, of which the principal is the well-known one at Ghent. The Superior-General of the Grand Béguinage there told me, when I visited it in October 1868, that the institution was threatened by innovations which she feared would end in its suppression. It seems that in 1793 the property of the Béguinages passed into the hands of the "Administration des Hospices," for whom the Superiors of the Béguinages now act as trustees, and to whom they render monthly accounts. The Superior-General of the Grand Béguinage gave me a pamphlet in the form of a letter addressed in 1862 by the Superiors of the two Béguinages of Ghent to the "Conseil Communal" of that town, remonstrating against the proposed innovations, and giving a short sketch of the history and present state of the Béguinage, from which pamphlet, and from notes made of my conversation with her and with other sisters, I take the following particulars.

Each Béguinage consists of an enclosure containing a church, an infirmary for the sisters, and in the same building the resi-

dence of the Grande Dame or Superior-General, a certain number of convents (seven in the Petit Béguinage and eighteen in the Grand Béguinage) where the younger Béguines are educated, and a larger number of separate houses inhabited by the older Béguines. The present number of sisters in the two Béguinages of Ghent is about 1,300. Each convent has its own Superior, elected annually, and generally re-elected, by the sisters. These Superiors in their turn, with the concurrence of the priests and the Bishop, elect a Superior-General, or Grande Dame, who is assisted in the government of the Béguinage by a council consisting of two or three Béguines chosen by herself from among the most honourable and exemplary members of the sisterhood.

The age of admission is limited, but not very strictly, to any time between eighteen and thirty. The applicant must be of irreproachable character, must have a certificate of good conduct, and must be able to prove her possession of an income of not less than 110 fr. a year. The pamphlet says that this sum, though apparently small, has been proved by daily experience to be sufficient; that a Béguine can easily earn in addition 200 fr. a year; and that the sum of 310 fr. per annum is sufficient for her maintenance. The question of fixing a higher sum as the necessary yearly income has been repeatedly discussed, but has always been set aside as opposed to the object of the institution, which is to open an honourable asylum for women of all classes.

On entrance, each Béguine is required to pay a sum of 36 florins (3*l.*) for the furniture and repair of the convent to which she is to belong, and a similar sum for the church. These sums are paid in three instalments in the course of the two years' novitiate, and are returned to the novice if she leaves the Béguinage. It is only after two years, and after having twice obtained the votes of the other sisters in her favour, that the novice is allowed to make her profession.

Each sister must spend the first six years in one of the convents of the Béguinage: after that time, she may, if she prefers it, take a separate house at her own expense, and either occupy it alone or receive another sister, or sometimes as many

as three others, as her lodgers. The Béguines also sometimes, with the permission of the Superior-General, take in "des personnes laïques, pieuses et tranquilles," as lodgers; generally elderly women, and often their own relations.

Each Béguine, whether living in a separate house or in a convent, lives entirely at her own expense, and has her own separate housekeeping. The refectory of the convent is surrounded with little cupboards, each belonging to one of the sisters, and containing her provisions, which she buys separately and cooks separately, and eats at a little movable bracket attached to the cupboard: each sister even has her own separate saucepan marked with her own name. The Superior of the convent I visited assured me that this plan was quite as cheap as a common table.

The only common fund is that appropriated to the infirmary, and for the relief of the sisters in any temporary emergency: this fund is privately administered by the Superior-General. The inmates of the infirmary are poor and disabled Béguines who have lived at least four years in the Béguinage. Four sisters are appointed by the Superior-General to act as nurses in the infirmary. The Béguinage has certain endowments from legacies and donations, which are distributed by the "Administration des Hospices," the Superiors naming those candidates among the Béguines whom they consider best entitled to them according to the intentions of the benefactors.

Each Béguine, on entrance, promises obedience to the Superior, and observance of the rules of the establishment. The rule is not shown to any one. The Superior told me it had never been altered. It is read aloud in the convents on the principal festivals of the year. The pamphlet, referring to the rule, says that the provisions which have not been given refer to "the dress, the leave of absence, and holidays of the Béguines; and regulate their daily prayers, the services they are to attend, and prescribe certain wise rules for the preservation of peace and harmony among them;" and that these have been omitted as of no interest. I was told that the daily prayers thus prescribed occupied about six hours of every day; that the Béguinage was under the direction of the Dominicans; and that

there were four confessors, from whom each Béguine might choose her own director. No priest, however, has any temporal authority over the sisters, except the Bishop and the curé of the parish, who, I gathered, are to some extent associated with the Superior-General in the government of the Béguinage.

Each Béguine has a fortnight's holiday in the year, and may, in case of the illness of any of her relations, obtain leave of absence for any length of time, even for years if she is wanted at home. The sisters living in separate houses may receive their near male relations, fathers, brothers, or uncles, for three days, or near female relations for a fortnight at a time, in their own houses. For a longer visit a special permission from the Superior-General is required. The sisters living in separate houses are free to go in and out of the Béguinage as they please; those in convents must ask permission of their Superior. I inquired particularly whether the sisters were at all employed as nurses or visitors among the poor, and was told that this is not considered as any part of their ordinary business. No doubt those who can go out freely do employ some of their time in this way, and a good many little ornamental works are done by the sisters and sold to visitors "pour de bonnes œuvres." The sisters also have a free school for poor children in the Béguinage; and in times of public distress, such as war or epidemics, when the other sisterhoods are not numerous enough, the Béguines form a sort of army of reserve, and act for the occasion as Sisters of Charity. This is one of the pleas put forward in their favour in the pamphlet to which I have referred. A list of public calamities is given, in which the Béguines came forward, either with large subscriptions or in some cases with their personal services, to the relief of the sufferers. For instance, in 1819 and 1821, when the government and the town of Ghent set on foot "ateliers de charité" or "colonies de bienfaisance," the Béguines gave a sum of 8,000 francs (320*l.*), besides a monthly contribution of 125 florins (10 guineas) continued for eighteen months. In 1826 there were terrible inundations in Holland and the neighbourhood of Ostend; in the following winter, great distress among the poor of Ghent; in 1830, an industrial crisis; on another occasion, great fires at Walwyck

and Stockheim; and on these and other occasions the Béguines are said to have given very liberal contributions to the funds collected in Ghent for the relief of the sufferers. Again, says the pamphlet, in 1809-10, when typhus fever raged among the soldiers, the hospitals were overburdened, and many of the military attendants deserted their posts. Eighty Béguines then for six months devoted themselves to the care of the sick, twenty of whom died in their service. In 1813 and in 1815, after the battle of Waterloo, the Béguinages "se dépouillèrent complètement" for the relief of the sufferers, giving money, linen, and bedding, without reserve. In 1832, in a time of cholera, each Béguinage volunteered to serve one hospital, and the Government afterwards awarded to each of them a gold medal with the inscription, "Les Béguinages ont bien mérité de la patrie et de l'humanité." In the cholera years of 1849 and 1853 the Béguinages came forward in a similar manner.

The writers of this pamphlet give a statement of their accounts for the year 1860, by which it appears that the revenues of the two Béguinages in that year amounted to 111,483 francs (about 4,455*l.*), and their expenses to 31,094 francs, leaving in the hands of the administration of the hospices a surplus of 80,389 francs, on which ground, as well as on that of the inoffensiveness and usefulness of the institution, of its antiquarian interest, and the works of charity performed in times of need by the Béguines, the Superiors appeal to the council to be protected from the proposed innovations. These appear to be as follows:—

1st. The introduction of "prébendières," *i.e.* aged female paupers, into the Béguinages; which is earnestly protested against on the ground of the annoyance it would cause to the present inmates, "des demoiselles aisées" of estimable families, or "des filles honnêtes" who earn a modest living by honourable work, and of the offence it would give to their families;

2nd. A prohibition to receive new inmates for a term of years, with a view to diminishing the number of Béguines;

3rd. An increase in the amount of yearly income required as a condition of entrance;

4th. The appointment of a higher rent for the houses;

5th. The transference of the right to admit candidates from the community to the "Administration des Hospices;"

And 6th, the cessation of the payment of the sum assigned to the maintenance of the infirmary.

These innovations, which were naturally regarded with considerable anxiety by the sisterhood, were in 1868 still under the consideration of the Council.

CHAPTER III.

THE THIRD ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS.

My account of the Third Order of St. Francis is taken from "La Gloire du Tiers Ordre de St. François, ou l'Histoire de son Établissement et de son Progrès, par le R. P. Hilarion de Nolay" (Lyons, 1694); Hélyot's "Histoire des Ordres Monastiques" (Paris, 1719); a manual for the use of members of the Order, published at Paris in 1867, by authority; and a monthly magazine called the "Annales Franciscaines," which is published at Paris for the express purpose of circulating information respecting all the (now numerous) Franciscan orders and institutions, and especially to promote the interests of the Third Order.

The three Orders of St. Francis were founded by him at about the time in which the Béguinages were beginning to spread over Europe—that is, early in the 13th century. In 1209 he instituted the Order of Minor Brethren, and soon afterwards that of the Clarissans, or Poor Ladies. The Third Order was an association of persons of both sexes living "in the world," in connection with the two regular orders, and intended as a sort of extension, in a milder form, of their benefits and duties. In the enthusiasm awakened by the preaching of St. Francis, many of his disciples, who were prevented by their occupations or their family ties from joining either of his regular orders, entreated him to give them some rule of life by means of which they might escape from the wrath of God, and obtain eternal life. St. Francis, for the benefit of these persons, prescribed certain observances and a particular dress; and when these had been adopted by a considerable number, both

of men and women, he in the following year, 1221, gave them a rule, and the name of the Order of Penitence. This example was soon followed by St. Dominic, and eventually third orders sprang up in connection with most of the regular orders.

The Rule given by St. Francis, and confirmed by a Bull of Nicholas IV. in 1289, with some alterations and additions, is given at length in the manual I have mentioned, together with the statutes which have been framed in explanation or modification of it by succeeding Popes. The following abridgment of the Rule (which, with the exception of one or two trifling differences of detail, corresponds exactly with that given in the Manual) is taken from Hélyot (Ordres Mon., v. vii., p. 217) :—

"Premièrement avant que de recevoir quelqu'un à ce troisième Ordre, on le doit soigneusement examiner s'il n'est point noté d'aucune infamie, s'il n'a point du bien d'autrui et s'il n'a aucun ennemi avec lequel il ne se soit pas réconcilié. On doit pareillement s'informer de son état, de son office, ou de sa condition, particulièrement s'il n'est point engagé dans les liens du mariage, ce qui est un obstacle à sa réception s'il n'a le consentement de sa femme, et réciproquement la femme de son mari, s'il est fidèle Catholique et obéissant à l'Église Romaine.

"Ceux qui sont reçus doivent faire un an de Noviciat, après lequel, si on les juge dignes de faire profession, ils y sont admis. et promettent de garder toute leur vie les commandements de Dieu, et de satisfaire aux transgressions de la Règle à la requisition du Visiteur. Après la profession ils ne peuvent plus sortir de l'Ordre, sinon pour être Religieux ou Religieuses, et trois mois après ils doivent faire leur testament.

"L'habit doit être de drap vil, de couleur ni tout-à-fait blanche ni tout-à-fait noire, sans aucun ornement mondain ; les Frères ne porteront point d'armes offensives, sinon pour la défense de la Foi, de l'Église, et de la Patrie, ou avec la permission des Supérieurs, qui pourront aussi dispenser les Sœurs, selon la condition de chacune, et la coutume du lieu, de la vilité du drap, et autres choses concernant leur habillement.

"Les festins, les comédies, les bals, et les danses leur sont défendus ; ils empêcheront soigneusement qu'aucun de leur

famille ne contribue en aucune manière à ces sortes de vanités mondaines. Les frères et sœurs s'abstiendront de manger de la viande les Lundis, les Mercredis, les Vendredis et les Samedis en chaque semaine, si ce n'est pour cause d'infirmité ou pour quelqu'autre nécessité. Ils jeûneront depuis la Saint Martin jusqu'à Noël, et depuis le Dimanche de la Quinquagésime jusqu'à Pâque, comme aussi tous les Mercredis, depuis la Toussaints jusqu'à la Quinquagésime, et tous les Vendredis de l'année, excepté le jour de Noël, s'il arrive un Vendredi; et ils garderont aussi les jeûnes commandés par l'Église. Ils feront seulement deux repas le jour, exceptés les malades, les débiles, les voyageurs, et ceux qui pour subsister s'occupent à un travail pénible, auxquels il est permis de faire trois repas par jour, depuis Pâque jusqu'à la Saint Michel, et de manger tout ce qui leur sera présenté, lorsqu'ils travaillent pour autrui, excepté les Vendredis et autres jours d'abstinence commandés par l'Église. Les femmes enceintes sont exemtes des austérités corporelles; mais tous s'étudieront à la sobriété du boire et du manger. Ceux qui sont obligés au Bréviaire le diront selon la coûtume du lieu où ils demeurent, et il sera libre aux autres de le dire aussi, ou bien douze Pater pour Matines, sept pour chacune des Heures Canoniales, avec un Gloria Patri à la fin de chacune; ils ajouteront à Prime et à Complies un Credo avec le Pseaume Miserere, et ceux qui ne le sçavent pas pourront dire au lieu de ce Pseaume trois Pater. Ils tâcheront d'aller à Matines à leur Paroisse pendant l'Avent et le Carême. Tous les jours ils entendront la Sainte Messe. Une fois le mois ils s'assembleront pour assister à une Messe en commun, et entendre la parole de Dieu. Ils se confesseront et communieront à Noël, à Pâque, et à la Pentecôte, après s'être réconciliés et avoir restitué le bien d'autrui, s'ils en ont qui soit mal acquis.

"Ils éviteront les jurements solennels, sinon dans la nécessité pour la Foi, la calomnie, pour porter témoignage, et pour autoriser des contrats de vente. Ils se garderont aussi de jurer dans leurs discours ordinaires; et pour chaque jurement ou mensonge qu'ils auront fait inconsidérément, ils doivent dire le soir trois Pater pour pénitence. Chacun recevra l'Office qui

lui aura été donné, et tâchera de s'en acquitter fidèlement; aucun office ne sera perpétuel, mais pour un temps; on fera son possible pour conserver la paix entre les frères et sœurs et avec les externes; on évitera les procès, on cherchera les moyens plus doux pour les terminer. Le Ministre ou la Mère visitera une fois la semaine, par soi ou par d'autres, les frères ou sœurs qui seront malades et les excitera à pénitence, leur faisant administrer des biens communs à la congrégation tout ce qu'il leur sera nécessaire, supposé qu'ils soient en nécessité.

"Lorsque quelque Frère ou Sœur sera décédé, tous les autres assisteront à ses obsèques jusqu'à ce que le corps soit mis en sépulture, et pour son âme chaque Prêtre dira une messe et les autres cinquante Pseaumes ou cinquante Pater, avec le Requiem à la fin de chacun: ils feront célébrer en commun dans chaque année trois Messes pour les Frères et Sœurs, tant vivants que décédés, et diront tous un Pseaumier ou cent Pater avec le Requiem à la fin de chacun.

"Enfin une fois l'an, ou plusieurs fois, s'il est besoin, tous les frères et sœurs étant assemblés, le Visiteur, qui sera Prêtre et Religieux, fera la visite et imposera pénitence à ceux et celles qui auront commis des fautes contre la Règle, lesquelles lui auront été dénoncés par les Ministres ou Mères; les incorrigibles, après avoir été avertis par trois différentes fois, seront chassés de la Congrégation avec le conseil des discrets. Les Ordinaires et les Visiteurs ont pouvoir de dispenser des austérités et autres choses contenues dans la Règle, laquelle n'oblige à aucun pêché mortel ni même véniel."

Hélyot gives the following formulary of the vows taken by some members of the Third Order of St. Francis, and authorized by the Holy See:—

"Je N. promets et voue à Dieu, à la Vierge Marie, à notre Père S. François, et à tous les Saints et Saintes de Paradis, de garder tous les Commandements de Dieu, pendant tout le temps de ma vie, et de satisfaire comme il conviendra aux transgressions que j'aurai commises contre la Règle et manière de vivre de l'Ordre des Pénitents, instituée par Saint François et confirmée par le Pape Nicholas IV, selon la volonté du Visiteur de cet Ordre, lorsque je serai requis."

The Third Order (says the Manual) may be subdivided into several classes. There are, in the first place, the Regular Tertiarians, living in communities, and having taken the three solemn vows; having, in fact, become one of the regular monastic orders. Secondly, Tertiarians living in communities with simple (*i.e.* renewable) vows. "These communities, especially of sisters, are still very numerous in Italy, in Belgium, and in the north of France, where they have schools and hospitals. They are the elder and worthy rivals of the Sisters of Charity: they were the first to enter this path, for . . . . the Tertiarians have had hospitals, asylums, orphanages, and refuges since the middle of the 13th century." Thirdly, Tertiarians devoted to the service of communities of the first or second order; in many convents there are habitually two or three Tertiarians thus employed; the Clarissan nuns in some places have Tertiarians, commonly known as "sœurs tourières," for the external service of the convent. Fourthly, Tertiarians living with their own families, but under a vow of chastity; formerly a very numerous, but now a very small class. Women are not allowed to take this vow under forty years of age, and then only if of irreproachable character, of independent means, and not living in the same house with any man not related to them in the first degree. If permitted to take this vow, they may wear the habit outwardly, if circumstances allow them, but the veil and the "guimpe" are forbidden them. Fifthly, Tertiarians living in the world without any vows. These last are either isolated or members of regularly organized congregations.

In addition to the original Rule as given by St. Francis, certain statutes have been published by the Chapters-General of the First Order (under whose direction the Third Order has been placed by several Bulls) with the approbation of the Popes, thus affording an "authentic interpretation" of the Rule in its detailed application. From an "almost literal reproduction" of these statutes in the Manual already referred to, I take a few more particulars respecting the obligations incurred by members of the Third Order. The Statutes are intended for the use of congregations and isolated members

equally; but the regulations respecting discipline apply, of course, only to the congregations.

According to the Rule, as given by Hélyot and De Nolay, married persons could not be admitted without the consent of their husbands or wives. In the version of it given by the Manual, it is the husband's consent only that is required; and in the commentary supplied by the Statutes, we are further told that "formerly, when the Tertiarians were obliged to wear the habit of the order externally, women could not be admitted to it without the consent of their husbands; but, now that this practice no longer exists, they are no longer required to have the express permission, but only the tacit consent, of their husbands."

The Rule does not fix any age for admission; but the Statutes direct that, as a general rule, no postulant shall be admitted under eighteen or twenty years of age. Many restrictions are also enumerated as to the character of candidates. Bankrupts, indigent persons, vagrants, those who themselves or whose near relations are not of good character, or whose occupations are inconsistent with the due observance of the Rule, are to be refused.

We are told that the Sovereign Pontiffs have several times decided that the scapulary and cord constitute the costume, as well as the entire dress; but the scapulary must reach the waist, and the cord, though it may be as small as the wearer pleases, must be a cord, and not a mere thread. These may, and indeed in the case of women (with some exceptions) it seems must, be worn out of sight. The first scapulary and cord must be blessed, but when worn out they may be replaced without the repetition of that ceremony.

The Rule obliges Tertiarians to communicate not less than three times a year. The Statutes impose several additional communions, adding that the Père Gardien, the Visitor, or the Director may, for grave reasons or for public necessity, prescribe a general communion. Tertiarians are to confess once a fortnight, and are at full liberty to choose their own confessor, who need not even be a Franciscan.

If possible, every Tertiarian is to repeat every day the

"Couronne Franciscaine," to which numerous and invaluable indulgences are attached. The history of the "Couronne Franciscaine" is this:—A young man who had been in the habit of making every day a garland of flowers for an image of the Virgin, on taking the habit of St. Francis was no longer, during his novitiate, able to procure flowers for the purpose, and in his simplicity feared that she would withdraw her affection from him, which temptation of the devil nearly induced him to give up his vocation; upon which the Virgin appeared to him, and, having gently reprimanded him, taught him how to offer her a much more agreeable garland, which was to be composed of seventy Ave Marias, with a Paternoster after every ten Aves; being careful to meditate during each ten upon one of the seven joys she had experienced during the seventy years of her exile here.

Although Tertiarians are bound to make their wills within three months of their admission, the Statutes desire the Father Directors, whether monks or not, carefully to abstain from interfering in any way in the testamentary dispositions of brothers or sisters, unless consulted by them, and in that case not to advise the Tertiarians to leave anything to their own convents or churches, and still more to refuse absolutely if this should be proposed to them by the testator. The Tertiarians are to address each other as "brother" and "sister;" the priests as "father," and the female Superiors as "mother;" adding the "nom de religion" of each Tertiarian.

The fasts and abstinences prescribed by the Rule may be dispensed with in any one of "une foule de circonstances;" such as dining with or receiving one's friends, the dearness of "maigre" provisions, a state of dependence upon parents, husbands, or masters, a passing indisposition, a journey, or delicate health; and besides these, which are in themselves sufficient dispensations, a Tertiarian may at any time apply to the Father Director of the congregation, who on his side will always be very ready to grant dispensations. On the other hand, Tertiarians should always regret the necessity of having recourse to dispensations. The Statutes direct the Superiors rather to commute penances than altogether to dispense from

them. Fasts may be commuted into "other works of charity, such as praying for the dead, hearing masses, and giving alms to the poor." But "these dispensations can only be temporary, especially in what concerns the essential obligations of the Rule, and we do admit that permission can be given no longer to wear the habit, or to take a mere thread for the girdle in place of the cord. With a little goodwill, one can do much more than one thinks in all the practices of the Rule. The spiritual favours and the indulgences with which the Church has enriched the Third Order are attached to the observance of the Rule. Thus Tertiarians, in seeking to escape from its exigencies, or to lessen them, by means of surreptitious dispensations, would voluntarily deprive themselves of these remunerating favours of the Church." Of these spiritual favours a list is given in the Manual, which is utterly bewildering to the uninitiated, even with the help of the accompanying explanations. Indeed, the conditions on which indulgences are granted are such that I suppose no one can ever possibly know how the account stands. I extract from the Manual the following explanation of these conditions, not venturing to translate it :—

"L'indulgence est partielle ou plénière ; temporaire ou perpétuelle ; locale, personnelle, ou réelle. L'indulgence plénière est une rémission de toute la peine due au péché ; en sorte que celui qui mourrait immédiatement après avoir gagné cette indulgence, monterait au ciel sans passer par les flammes du purgatoire, parcequ'il aurait pleinement satisfait à la justice divine en s'appropriant ce précieux trésor.

"L'indulgence partielle a ses limites ; elle peut être de quarante jours, de cent jours, de sept quarantaines, de sept ans, etc. ; elle ne remet qu'une partie de la peine temporelle due au péché. Il ne faut pas croire néanmoins que celui qui gagne une indulgence de cent jours ou de sept ans soit par là même affranchi de cent jours ou de sept années de purgatoire ; cette manière de déterminer l'étendue de l'indulgence est relative à la pénitence que prescrivaient les anciens canons. En sorte qu'une indulgence de quarante jours est la rémission de la peine qu'on aurait rachetée par une pénitence canonique de quarante jours ;

mais il peut arriver que celui qui a presqu'entièrement satisfait à la justice divine, obtienne, par une indulgence partielle, la rémission entière de la peine qui lui restait encore à expier."

After an explanation of the terms "temporary, perpetual, local, personal, or real," as referring to indulgences, the power of gaining which is attached either for a time or in perpetuity to places, persons, or things, respectively, we are told that some of these are for the living only, and some for the dead only; others for the living, with power of applying them to the solace of the souls in purgatory. Various conditions are then set forth; of which the first two are as follows:—

"1. Il est nécessaire que celui qui fait l'œuvre à laquelle est attachée une indulgence, ait l'intention actuelle ou virtuelle de la gagner. L'intention habituelle ou interprétative ne suffirait pas. Il convient donc que les Tertiaires renouvellent chaque matin à la prière, l'intention de gagner toutes les indulgences attachées aux pratiques de piété qu'ils pourront accomplir dans la journée.

"2. Il faut être en état de grâce pour gagner une indulgence; car, ainsi que nous l'avons déjà dit, l'indulgence ne remettant ni la coulpe du péché, ni la peine éternelle, ne peut s'appliquer qu'à ceux qui sont réconciliés avec Dieu. Pour gagner une indulgence plénière, il faut absolument avoir obtenu le pardon de toutes ses fautes et mortelles et vénielles, et ne conserver aucune affection au péché quelque léger qu'il soit; sans cela l'indulgence plénière devient partielle dans son application, c'est à dire qu'on n'en obtient qu'une partie plus ou moins forte, selon les dispositions où l'on se trouve. Il n'est cependant pas nécessaire d'être en état de grâce pour faire toutes les œuvres prescrites; il suffit d'être absous et réconcilié avec Dieu avant de faire la dernière."

After this there is not much interest in the remaining conditions, which lay down regulations about various matters of detail respecting confession, communion, combinations, commutations, and transference of indulgences. About seventy duodecimo pages of the Manual are devoted to the subject of the particular indulgences obtainable by members of the Third Order. Besides those peculiar to itself, "le Tiers Ordre par

ticipe par communication à toutes les faveurs spirituelles et indulgences accordées aux Frères-Mineurs, aux Clarisses, aux Frères-Prêcheurs, aux Carmes, aux Minimes, aux Camaldules, aux Augustins, aux Servites, à la Compagnie de Jésus et à tous les autres Ordres religieux, mendiants et non-mendiants."

The Manual, having set forth all these "innombrables richesses spirituelles," exhorts Tertiarians to take advantage of them, concluding the chapter with the following statement:—"Sainte Thérèse rapporte qu'une religieuse, qui d'ailleurs avait eu assez d'imperfections à se reprocher, alla droit au ciel après sa mort, sans même passer par les flammes du purgatoire, à cause de la grande foi qu'elle avait eue aux indulgences, de l'exactitude et de la dévotion avec lesquelles elle les avait gagnées."

Such being the rule of life of the Third Order, and the inducements to the observance of that rule, it remains for me to describe its organization.

The Third Order is, as I have already said, placed under the direction of the First Order; the Minister-General of each of the three branches of the First Order, the Provincial for his province, and the Père Gardien for the district attached to each convent, are the superiors and *ex-officio* Visitors of the Third Order. They may appoint any monk of the First Order as Visitor in their place.

The congregations of the Third Order are (with some variation) generally constituted as follows:—Each congregation is governed, in subordination to the Superiors of the First Order, by a regular or secular priest, called a Director. Where there is a convent of the First Order, this office belongs to the Père Gardien of the convent, and he may either exercise it himself or delegate it to a priest belonging to either the First or the Third Order. Where there is no convent, the Père Gardien of the district appoints a priest, if possible a member of the Third Order, to act as Director, and a deputy to represent him in absence or illness. The Director and *ex-officio* Visitor is to preside at general assemblies, to explain the Rule and preach in the monthly meetings, to visit sick members specially recommended to him by the Rectors,

and exercise a general superintendence over the affairs of the congregation.

Below him is a Rector for each congregation of men, and a Mother-Superior for each congregation of women, who appear to be the real acting authorities. In each congregation there are also an Assistant, or Deputy Rector, a Master of Novices, a secretary, a treasurer, "zélateurs," "sacristans," "infirmiers," and various other officers, who form the governing body of the congregation. They meet under the presidency of the Director, and are called the "Discrétoire," or council. The Rector and other officers are elected by the congregation, and remain in office for three years (formerly one). It is the business of the Rector to be present at all the meetings of the congregation; to keep an account of all alms received and transmitted to the treasurer, who is to make no payments except with the approval and signature of the Rector; to provide all that is wanted for the solemnities of the congregation; privately to distribute alms to brethren not known to be poor; to bring about reconciliations between the brethren in case of quarrels among themselves or with others; to administer brotherly correction to those who have committed faults against the rule; to inform the Visitor of the faults committed by brethren, and of the means to be taken for their correction, and to provide that those who are incorrigible may, with the advice of the "Discrétoire," be expelled from the Society.

The Master of the Novices is to hold special meetings for the instruction of the novices under his care, to whom it is his duty to explain the Rule, and whom he is to exercise in the best manner of performing the devotions and ceremonies enjoined by the Rule. He is to keep a register containing the names and surnames of every novice, the date of his admission, his "nom de religion," his condition and profession, his abode, the date of his birth, the date of his profession, or a note of rejection.

The secretary has the charge of all documents belonging to the congregation, keeps notes of the business transacted at meetings, and a register containing the names of, and all particulars respecting, every member of the Society. He is to

keep careful annals of the congregation, containing a record of elections, benefactions, acquisitions of property, reparations, good works undertaken by the congregation, short biographies of brethren departed in the odour of sanctity, &c. &c. He also has the charge of the library and title-deeds of the indulgences granted to the Third Order by the Holy See.

The treasurer has of course the charge of all the funds of the Society, but, for fear of scandal, is not allowed to make any collections except from members, nor to spend anything without the authority and signature of the Rector.

"The 'zélateurs' are specially charged to watch secretly and with discretion over the strict observance of the rule, statutes, and usages of the Third Order. They are to inform the Brother Rector of the negligences and infractions of which brethren may be guilty. It also belongs to the 'zélateurs' to superintend the conduct of Tertiarians in the midst of the world; and if it should happen that one of them gave any scandal, they are to inform the Brother Rector, and if necessary the Father Director, in order that means may be taken to put a speedy end to it. These functions are to be confided only to brethren who are fervent, charitable, and of great prudence. In great towns, where it is impossible for all to know each other, the secretary is to give the 'zélateurs' a list of the brothers in his parish or quarter." In case of sickness or death, the "zélateur" is immediately to give information to the Rector, or "infirmier," in order that relief may be given and funerals duly attended.

The "infirmiers" are either priests or old and experienced brothers, whose business is to visit the sick, to apply to the Rector for any relief which they may require, to see that the sick person receives the sacraments, makes his will, performs various spiritual exercises, and has his habit put on, or, if that is impossible, placed on his bed, at the approach of his death.

The "Discrétoire," or council, consists of the above-mentioned officers, and others who may be elected by the congregation. The Manual gives minute directions respecting the manner of their proceeding. Everything is to be decided by the majority of voices, the Father Director having a casting vote, and the

ballot being used in any delicate question, important deliberation, or equal division of opinions, in questions respecting the admission, exclusion, &c. of members, or whenever it is asked for by any member of the council.

There are also very minute directions about the manner of election of the Rector and of the inferior officers. These take place every three years, under the presidency of the Father Director; each brother, beginning from the youngest, writing the name of his candidate on a piece of paper, with his signature attached but concealed. No brother is allowed to refuse any office which may be thus assigned to him. A meeting may take place a month before the elections, at which the Father Director will announce the names of those whom he thinks most fit to be elected. The Brother Rector and other members of the council may be re-elected. If there are not a sufficient number of brethren to proceed in the usual manner, the Père Gardien or the visitor may proceed as they think fit.

The Visitor visits each congregation once a year, receives a report of the proceedings of the year, inspects documents, delivers an exhortation in case of necessity, pronounces sentence of exclusion upon incorrigible offenders, after having ascertained that they have been duly warned, imposes penance upon less hardened offenders, and gives general advice to the officers and brethren. It is to be observed, however, that his direction is purely spiritual, and that he is not allowed to interfere in the regulation of the material interests of the congregation.

The correction of faults, which is one of the most important objects of the Institution of the Third Order, is entrusted chiefly to the Brother Rector, who is bound to give two warnings, a third being given by the Father Director, before the final sentence of exclusion can be pronounced by the Visitor. In exceptional or urgent cases, however, a member may be temporarily excluded by the council, under the presidency of the Father Director.

The last chapter of the Manual is devoted to a repetition and amplification of the assurance contained in the Rule, that it is not binding under any mortal or even venial sin. "La Règle du

Tiers Ordre n'oblige point sous peine de péché mortel, telle a été la volonté expresse et formelle de son glorieux fondateur, Saint François d'Assise. Est-il rien de plus rassurant pour les Tertiaires dont la conscience timorée ou scrupuleuse serait tentée de s'exagérer les obligations qu'ils ont contractées en entrant dans le Tiers Ordre?"

This, however, respects only those parts of the Rule which are no part of the commandments of God or of the Church.

I take from Sir James Stephen's essay on St. Francis of Assisi (Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, vol. i. p. 128) the following remarks upon the Institution of this Third Order, as it existed in the time of St. Francis himself:—

"The founder of such a confederacy must have had some of the higher qualities of a legislator. It would be difficult even, now, with all the aid of history and philosophy, to devise a scheme better adapted to restrain the licentiousness, to soften the manners, and to mitigate all the oppressions of an iron age. Secular men and women were combined with ardent devotees, in one great society, under a code flexible as it addressed the one, and inexorable as it applied to the other, of those classes; and yet a code which imposed on all the same general obligations, the same undivided allegiance, the same ultimate ends, and many of the same external badges. Christianity itself, when first promulgated, must to heathen eyes have had an aspect not wholly unlike that which originally distinguished the third estate of the Franciscan orders; and rapid as may have been the corruption and decline of that estate, it would be mere prejudice or ignorance to deny that it sustained an important office in the general advancement of civilization and of truth.

"In the times of Francis himself, and of his immediate successors, the Franciscan cord (the emblem of the restraint in which the soul of man is to hold the Beast to which it is wedded) was to be seen on countless multitudes; in the market-place, in the universities, in the tribunals, and even on the throne. In the camp it was still more frequent; for there was much latent significance in the exceptional terms by which the general prohibition of military service had been qualified

for the members of the Order of Penitence. In the early part of the thirteenth century, 'the defence of the Church, of the Catholic faith, and of their native land,' was, to Italian ears, an intelligible periphrasis for serving either under the standard of the cross against the Albigenses, or under the standard of the Guelphs against the Ghibellines; and the third estate of the Minorites formed an enthusiastic, patriotic, and religious chivalry, which the Pope could direct at pleasure against either his theological or his political antagonists."

From the earliest times of its institution, the Third Order was specially favoured by the Popes, of whom many, Pius IX. amongst others, have been members of it. Up to the year 1500, 109 Bulls had been published in its favour, and it has been approved by two general councils—that of Vienna in 1309, and that of the Lateran in 1516. One hundred and thirty-four crowned heads, and a great multitude of royal dukes and princes, and more canonized saints than all the other Third Orders put together (amongst others, St. Louis of France, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, and St. Vincent de Paule) are claimed for it by the Manual. What is more to our purpose is, that from the middle or end of the thirteenth century its members have undertaken works of charity of all kinds. They had hospitals at Rome, Ferrara, Reggio, Forli, Genoa, Florence, Cologne, and Amiens. They had also asylums and houses of rest for pilgrims, orphanages, and refuges for fallen women. Their Rule does not enjoin the practice of works of charity, except the relief of poor members; and the Statutes even earnestly warn members "not to associate themselves" with any such works outside the congregation, without having first well ascertained that they will never be an obstacle to the accomplishment of the obligations and duties imposed upon them by their vocation as members of the Third Order, or without the permission of the council. Within these limits they seem to have still very numerous charitable institutions of every kind, which are under the direction of the council. These are apparently carried on principally by the "regular" branch of the Order—that is, by nuns living in communities.

The Third Order spread very rapidly, during the thirteenth

century, in France, Germany, and Spain. In course of time it spread into Asia: it had congregations in India and Japan, where many of the members incurred martyrdom. The Minor Brethren also introduced the Third Order into America, where, according to a rather startling statement of the Manual (p. 43), there appeared, by a census taken in 1686, to be 118,000 Tertiarians. From the first, it seems to have encountered a certain amount of persecution. The Emperor Frederick II. was remarkable among those who opposed it. In many towns in Italy, during the first five years of its existence, the civil governors imposed vexatious taxes upon its members, which led Pope Gregory IX. to issue two Bulls for its protection. At the end of the thirteenth and during the fourteenth century, the confusion already mentioned (pp. 17 and 27), between several different sects of various degrees of orthodoxy, brought the Third Order into some disrepute with the bishops. Pope Clement V., in the general council at Vienna, published in 1307 a Bull distinguishing between the orthodox Tertiarians and Beguinæ and the heretical sects commonly known as "Fratricelli," "Beghardi," Brethren of the Free Spirit, &c., with whom they were frequently confounded. John XXII. published a similar Bull in 1318, and another in 1321. The Third Order seems, however, notwithstanding these Papal sanctions, to have suffered considerably in reputation and numbers, until, some time in the fifteenth century, "les choses en vinrent au point que personne n'osait parler du Tiers Ordre." At this time, however, St. John of Capistran restored the Third Order to credit, and for three centuries it continued to "enrichir l'Église des plus précieuses vertus." Before the Revolution of 1789 the Third Order, we are told, shone with great splendour all over Catholic Europe, strongly organized congregations being established in all its capitals and secondary towns; the most celebrated being those of Rome, Paris, Naples, Florence, Lisbon, and Madrid, in which last town there were in 1689 more than 25,000 members. During the eighteenth century, however, in the "cataclysme général de toutes les institutions catholiques," secret societies took the place of the Third Orders, and the Revolution reduced it to

a very low ebb, from which, within the last few years, there appears to have been a remarkable revival. In the "Annales Franciscaines" I find, in the Obituary for the last seven years, notices of the deaths of 688 members of the Third Order: of these 570 are sisters, 49 priests, and 69 laymen. Some of these are isolated Tertiarians, but the greater number are described as members of the congregation of such a place. The French towns thus mentioned as having congregations of the Third Order established in them are 120 in number. In the first number of the same publication there is a circular letter, dated May 1861, from the T.-R. Père Laurent, at that time "Commissaire-Général" for the Third Order in France, in which the number of Tertiarians then existing in France is said to be 30,000, and to be daily increasing.

CHAPTER IV.

SISTERS OF CHARITY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAULE.

THE following account is taken from Hélyot's "Histoire des Ordres Monastiques," vol. viii.; "Vie de St. Vincent de Paule," by M. l'Abbé Maynard; "Vie de Louise de Marillac (Madame le Gras), par le R. Père Gobillon," edited and enlarged by M. Collet (Paris, 1862); "La Sœur de Charité, par M. A. de Pistoye: Epître suivie d'une Analyse des Conférences spirituelles tenues pour les Filles de la Charité par S. Vincent de Paule, sur leurs Règles Communes"[1] (Paris, 1863); and from notes made at the time from conversations which I had with the Rev. Père Etienne, Superior-General of the Mission, and with some of the Superiors and sisters of the Order, at Paris, in 1868.

Like the Third Order of St. Francis, this sisterhood owes its origin to the zeal excited in a country town by the preaching of its founder. In July 1617, Vincent de Paule, who had been living in the family of M. de Gondi (father of the Cardinal de Retz), as tutor to his children and spiritual adviser of his wife, became the curé of the parish of Châtillon les Dombes, in the diocese of Lyons. In preaching there one day, he recommended to the charity of the parishioners a poor family in the neighbourhood, who were ill and in want. So many of his hearers immediately went to their relief, that M. de Paule, in order to regulate the charitable zeal he had awakened, organized, with the help of two ladies, a "Confrérie de Charité," or District Visiting Society, for which, after three

[1] The Rule, which appears to have been published for the first time by M. de Pistoye, and a report of the Conferences, are preserved in the Bibliothèque Impériale, among the "documents servant à l'histoire de France." Some of the Articles of the Rule are missing.

months' experiment, he sought and obtained the approbation of the Archbishop of Lyons. "Elle se composait de femmes de piété et de vertu, filles, mariées, ou veuves, qui devaient choisir un procureur pour l'administration du temporel, et deux pauvres femmes pour les aider à garder les malades. A sa tête étaient une prieure, une trésorière et une assistante. Toutes, même les officières, devaient visiter et servir les malades chacune en son jour, les assister dans leur corps et dans leur âme, et les accompagner au tombeau. Elles se réunissaient en assemblées pour traiter de leur avancement spirituel et du bien de la confrérie, suivaient des règles communes, et s'obligeaient à quelques exercices spirituels en particulier." (Maynard, p. 31.) M. de Paule established similar societies of men, but these did not prosper or multiply in the same manner. Those composed of women spread quickly all over France; and though originally intended only for the country, they were in 1629 introduced into Paris, where they also multiplied rapidly. Meanwhile, M. de Paule, after spending six months as curé of Châtillon, had been persuaded by Madame de Gondi to give up the parish and return to his former position in her family, and to promise never again to leave her as long as she lived. With her assistance and that of her husband, M. de Paule founded the congregation of the "Prêtres de la Mission." "Le 17 Avril, 1625, un contrat de fondation fut passé, par lequel lesdits seigneur et dame, considérant les besoins et l'abandon des campagnes, donnaient à Vincent de Paule une somme de 45,000 livres, dont le revenu devait servir à l'entretien d'un nombre proportionné d'ecclésiastiques choisis par lui, vivant en communauté sous sa conduite et celles de ses successeurs, avec le titre de prêtres de la Mission, s'obligeant à n'exercer aucun ministère dans les grandes villes, et à renoncer à tous bénéfices et dignités ecclésiastiques, et destinés à évangéliser d'abord, de cinq ans en cinq ans, toutes les terres des fondateurs, puis les forçats, et à leur volonté les bourgs et villages." Two months afterwards, the death of Madame de Gondi set Vincent de Paule free to go and live at the head of this congregation, of which he was Superior until his death in 1660

at the age of eighty-four. The congregation at first occupied the Collége des Bons Enfants, but after some years was transferred to the Priory of S. Lazare, where it remained until the Revolution of 1789.

In 1632 Pope Urban VIII., in a Bull approving the institution of the Congregation of the Mission, expressly desired the priests belonging to it to establish "Confréries de Charité" wherever they went. As these multipled, M. de Paule found it necessary to employ some one to visit them from time to time, to encourage and direct them, and to keep up a bond of union with them. For this purpose he employed Mademoiselle or (as we should now say) Madame le Gras, a young widow, who under his direction had dedicated herself entirely to works of charity.

Before setting out on these journeys, she used to take her instructions in writing from the hand of M. de Paule, and to receive the communion. She was generally accompanied by some other pious ladies, and travelled in rough carriages, and lodged very poorly, in order to "conform herself to the misery of the poor," that she might the better encourage them to patience. In the intervals of her journeys into the country, she was employed in a similar manner in inspecting and organizing "Confréries de Charité" in Paris itself. The original plan of these societies was that the ladies belonging to them should themselves do all that was necessary for the sick, make their beds, dress their wounds, and administer food and medicine. In the country villages this was not altogether foreign to the habits of many of these ladies; but when the societies were established in Paris, they were joined by many ladies whose rank and circumstances made such personal attendance on the poor impossible: women of a lower class were therefore wanted, whom the ladies might employ to do what they could not themselves undertake. M. de Paule collected a few country girls for this work, and gave them to the ladies as assistants. It was, however, soon felt that means must be taken to give these girls some proper training for their work, and to secure a permanent supply of such trained women with some bond of union amongst themselves. Madame le Gras

offered herself for this work, and in 1633 M. de Paule gave her the charge of three or four young women whom he had chosen for the purpose. The number soon increased; and on the 25th March, 1634, Madame le Gras bound herself to the work by a perpetual vow. In 1636 she took a house at La Chapelle, a little way out of Paris, for herself and her young women, where she remained till 1641; when, in order to be nearer to M. de Paule and the different works in which these "filles de la charité" were employed, she removed with her community to the Faubourg St. Denis, opposite St. Lazare, where the "maison mère" of the community remained until the Revolution.

Meanwhile, in 1634, M. de Paule had organized another society of ladies, called the "Assemblée des Dames de la Charité." Madame la Présidente Goussault, Madame le Gras, and other ladies, having observed in their visits to the Hôtel Dieu that the patients needed many comforts with which they were not supplied in the hospital, formed themselves into a society, under the direction of M. de Paule, for supplying such wants, and for visiting the sick to administer spiritual teaching and consolation. After a time, M. de Paule found it well to divide the ladies into two classes, one for temporal and the other for spiritual ministrations. The business of the first class was to make and serve to the sick jams and jellies "by way of collation," and to prepare the way for the reception of the spiritual advice and consolations administered by the members of the other. This second class consisted of fourteen ladies, who were chosen for the purpose every three months, and who visited the hospital by turns, two together on each day of the week. Madame le Gras, besides taking part in this work herself, gave some of her "filles de la charité," whom at that time she was just beginning to train, to assist the ladies in the preparation and distribution of their gifts. The ladies took a lodging for them close by the Hôtel Dieu, where they made jams and jellies, not only for the patients, but also to be sold for the benefit of the poor. The "Assemblée des Dames de la Charité," like the "Confréries," had a superior, an assistant, and a treasurer; and regulations given them by their

director, M. de Paule. In the first year these ladies were the means of converting "more than 700 heretics and some infidels," besides preparing an extraordinary number of Catholics for death or for a virtuous life. They also obtained the abolition of a custom, which had till then existed at the Hôtel Dieu, of obliging every patient on being admitted to the hospital immediately to confess and communicate. They undertook many other works of charity, always under the direction of M. de Paule, and assisted by the Sisters of Charity. These two societies went hand in hand; the ladies, many of whom were very rich, supplying the funds, and the sisters working more or less under their direction. In this way, at M. de Paule's prompting, were established the Asylum for the Enfants Trouvés, the Hospice du Nom de Jésus for old people (which is said to have suggested the idea of the later Hôpitaux Généraux), an asylum for convicts near the Porte St. Bernard, and other charitable works of various kinds.

In 1646 M. de Paule obtained the King's letters patent by which the Society of the Sisters of Charity was constituted a "confrérie." These letters having been lost, a second constitution was granted in January 1655, by the Cardinal de Retz, then Archbishop of Paris, the King, and the Holy See, by all of whom the statutes and regulations of the Society were formally approved. By this second constitution the Society was placed under the perpetual direction of the Superior-General of the Prêtres de la Mission, but in dependence always upon the Archbishops of Paris.

In the month of August 1655, M. de Paule convoked an assembly of all the sisters then in Paris, read to them their rules and constitutions, appointed their officers (Madame le Gras being named Superior for life), wrote down all their names, received their unanimous consent to the rules, and gave the newly-organized community his solemn benediction. From this time till his death he held weekly conferences with Madame le Gras and all the sisters upon each article of these rules.

In the "ordonnance" by which the Cardinal de Retz sanc-

tioned the institution, its objects are set forth as follows ("La Sœur de Charité," p. 87):—"D'autant que ladite confrérie" (that of the Dames de la Charité already mentioned) "est composée de femmes mariées, veuves et filles de piété, lesquelles prenaient soin de visiter et assister lesdits pauvres malades, de leur administrer la nourriture et les médicaments, et procurer l'assistance spirituelle d'iceux, pour porter à bien vivre ceux qui guérissent, et à bien mourir ceux qui tendent à la mort; et que l'expérience a fait voir que les dames de condition de ladite confrérie avaient difficulté de porter les vivres qu'il fallait aux pauvres malades, comme aussi à faire leurs lits et à leur donner les remèdes, et généralement à leur rendre les autres menus services; pour pourvoir à cet inconvénient ladite congrégation de la Mission, de l'avis des dites Dames de Charité, a disposé des filles et veuves de basse condition à se mettre dans la dite confrérie, pour s'employer aux choses plus basses qu'il faut exercer vers lesdits malades, et à cet effet les a fait vivre par ensemble dans une maison à ce destinée, sous la direction de demoiselle Louise de Marillac, veuve de feu M. le Gras, ... laquelle les instruit dans la piété, les dresse à bien servir les pauvres malades, à les saigner, à faire et administrer les médicaments, et ensuite elle les envoye dans les paroisses de la ville de Paris et des champs, et aux hôpitaux auxquels on les demande, les rappelle et change de lieu en autre selon l'exigence des cas, les emploie sous sa conduite à plusieurs autres bonnes œuvres, comme à l'élèvement des enfants trouvés de la ville de Paris, à l'assistance des pauvres criminels condamnés aux galères, et des malades des prisons, à l'instruction des pauvres, leur montrant à prier Dieu, à lire et écrire, et enfin à toutes les bonnes œuvres auxquelles elles peuvent être utiles, le tout de l'avis et par la direction dudit exposant, et conformément aux réglements et statuts que nous avons ci-devant approuvés." . . . .

The constitution which is thus approved is as follows:—The "confrérie" is composed of widows and maidens, who are to elect a superior from among themselves every three years by a majority of voices, in presence of the Superior-General of the Mission, or of one of the priests of the Mission deputed by

him. The same Superior may be elected for two, but not more, successive periods of three years. The sisters are to elect three other officers annually—an assistant to the Superior, a treasurer, and a "dispensière." The Superior is to act in everything with the advice of the Director (the Superior-General of the Mission or his deputy); she is to be, "as it were, the soul animating the body;" she is to receive candidates, with the advice of the Director and the three other officers, to train them in everything necessary for their employment, but especially in the practice of the Christian virtues belonging to their condition, instructing them rather by example than by precept; and she is to send, to retain, to recall, and to employ them in whatever belongs to their work, wherever they may be. The assistant, the treasurer, and the "dispensière" form a council for the assistance of the Superior, and each in her place acts as deputy for those above her in case of their absence. The treasurer gives a monthly account to the Superior, and an annual account to the Director in presence of all the other officers. The "dispensière" gives a weekly account to the Superior.

All the sisters are to obey the Superior and her representatives, as obeying God in their persons; they are also to obey the Director as regards their conduct.

Those who desire to be received into the Society are to present themselves to the Superior, who, after having ascertained their vocation, and conferred with the Director, will train and employ them as she thinks fit.

In the lifetime of M. de Paule and that of Madame le Gras, who died only a few months earlier than himself, the sisters had been sent, not only to several hospitals and parishes in France (among others, to take charge of the Petites Maisons, a hospital for the insane), but to thirty different stations in the provinces, and even into foreign countries. Madame le Gras herself went to Angers and Nantes to establish some of her sisters in charge of the hospitals there. Anne of Austria sent for them to Calais to serve a hospital built by her for the reception of soldiers wounded in the siege of Dunkirk; and the Queen of Poland asked for and obtained a few sisters, who, on

their arrival, were employed to nurse the sufferers from the plague, which had just broken out in Warsaw, and afterwards took charge of an orphan asylum in the same town. Madame le Gras also opened her house to women who wished to make a "retraite spirituelle," and as an asylum for young women from Picardy, who were driven from their homes by the war. Anne of Austria contributed largely to the expense of all these works.

In the " Histoire des Ordres Monastiques," published in 1719, eighty-six years after the first foundation of the order, Hélyot says that there were at that time two hundred and ninety establishments of these sisters in France, Poland, and the Low Countries, and in these houses there were more than 1,500 sisters. Besides the great number of parishes in Paris in which there were always two or three sisters to take care of the poor, they were established at the Invalides, the Incurables, and the other institutions already mentioned.

At the time of the Revolution they were dispersed, forbidden to live in communities, or to serve in the schools and hospitals. Immediately after the Reign of Terror was over, however, the sisters re-assembled in the " Maison Mère," and were soon afterwards allowed to resume their original costume. The number of sisters and of establishments continued to increase rapidly, and I was told in 1868, by the Rev. Père Etienne, the present Superior-General of the Mission, that there were then 20,000 sisters of the order in all parts of the world. Of these about 3,000 were stationed in Paris, and about 12,000 in other parts of France.

It appears from the official report of the Census taken in 1861[1] that there were in that year 6,158 members of this sisterhood in France; 2,310 of whom were engaged in education, 47 in directing refuges, &c., and 3,801 as "hospitalières."[2] Of these, 1,615 were in Paris, 616 of whom were in the " Maison Mère" (this number would include the novices), 376 engaged in education, and 623 as "hospitalières."

[1] Statistique de la France. (Recensement spécial des Communautés Religieuses.) Strasbourg: Imprimerie administrative, 1864. The results of the corresponding part of the Census of 1866 are not yet published.

[2] This term applies to the sisters engaged in visiting the poor, as well as to those employed in hospital work.

It is the boast of the present community to have maintained its original rule, constitution, and spirit without variation. There is, indeed, no provision made by that constitution for any change in the rule. The Superior-General himself is, as he told me, quite powerless to make the slightest alteration in it. He told me that the sisters are not allowed to take solemn vows; that, since they are perfectly free to leave the Society, they can, if they please, join other orders; that though the rule does not forbid the reception of sisters who have belonged to other orders, custom does,—it is not approved. He also told me that only four or five out of the eight hundred novices annually received are rejected; about the same number having retired during the three months' postulancy, previous to the novitiate.

A sister told me that the amount of "dot" usually required was about 500 francs, though those who wish it may give more; that the one rule, to which no exception was ever made, was that against receiving any candidate as to the legitimacy of whose birth there was any doubt; and that the reason of the rule against the admission of any one who has been a servant, which is, I believe, very generally observed, is that St. Vincent thought the service of the poor too great an honour for any one who had been in any other service. Reasons of more practical importance might easily be suggested.

There is only one general hospital in Paris which is now served by the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paule,—the Hôpital Necker. They are employed in some of the military hospitals in the Enfants Assistés, some of the asylums for old people, and other charitable institutions, and in a great majority of the Maisons de Secours, where they keep schools, and from whence they visit the poor and sick of the district, and administer relief, partly from the funds of the Assistance Publique, partly from money entrusted to them by private charity. The large orphan asylums established by the Empress Eugénie are entrusted to them. I have been told that in the provinces their work lies more in the hospitals than is the case in Paris, where most of the hospitals are served by other orders, and where the

Sisters of St. Vincent are chiefly employed in schools and in visiting the poor.

As the best means of making known the spirit of the institution, as it was at the time of its foundation, I give, from the work of M. de Pistoye, already mentioned, the whole of the Rule, notwithstanding its length; together with some extracts from the conferences, chosen not so much as representative specimens, as because they put in a clear light the views of the founder upon some of the questions to which in a later part of this work I shall have to refer.

SŒURS DE S. VINCENT DE PAULE.

RÈGLES COMMUNES.

CHAPITRE I.

ART. 1.—La fin principale pour laquelle Dieu a appelé et assemblé les filles de la Charité est pour honorer notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ, comme la source et le modèle de toute charité, le servant corporellement et spirituellement en la personne des pauvres, soit malades, soit enfants, soit prisonniers ou autres, qui, par honte, n'osent faire paraître leur nécessité; c'est pourquoi, afin qu'elles puissent dignement correspondre à une si sainte vocation, et travailler avec grand soin à leur propre perfection, elles joindront les exercices intérieurs de la vie spirituelle aux emplois extérieurs de la charité chrétienne envers les pauvres, conformément à ces règles qu'elles s'étudieront de pratiquer fidèlement comme les moyens les plus propres pour arriver à cette fin.

ART. 2.—Elles se représenteront que, encore qu'elles ne soient pas dans une religion, cet état n'étant pas convenable aux emplois de leur vocation, néanmoins comme elles sont beaucoup plus exposées au dehors que les religieuses, n'ayant ordinairement pour monastères que les maisons des malades, pour cellule qu'une chambre de louage, pour chapelle que l'église de la paroisse, pour cloître que les rues de la ville ou les salles des hôpitaux, pour clôture l'obéissance, pour

grille la crainte de Dieu, et pour voile la sainte modestie ; elles sont obligées par cette considération de mener une vie aussi vertueuse que si elles étaient professes dans un ordre religieux, et de se comporter dans tous les lieux où elles se trouvent, parmi le monde, avec autant de récollection, de pureté de cœur et de corps, de détachement des créatures et d'édification, que de vraies religieuses dans la retraite propre de leur monastère.

ART. 3.—(*Missing.*)

ART. 4.—Elles feront leurs exercices, tant spirituels que temporels, en esprit d'humilité, de simplicité, de charité, et en union de ceux que Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ a faits sur la terre, dressant à cet effet leur intention dès le matin et au commencement de chaque action principale, particulièrement en allant servir les malades, et elles sauront que ces trois vertus sont comme les trois facultés de l'âme qui doit animer tout le corps en général et chaque membre en particulier de leur communauté, et qu'en un mot, c'est l'esprit propre de leur compagnie.

ART. 5.—Elles auront en horreur les maximes du monde, et embrasseront celles de Jésus-Christ, entre autres celles qui recommandent la mortification tant intérieure qu'extérieure, le mépris de soi-même et des choses de la terre, préférant les emplois bas et qui répugnent aux inclinations de la nature à ceux qui sont honorables et agréables ; prenant toujours la dernière place et le rebut des autres, et se persuadant qu'avec tout cela elles sont encore mieux qu'elles ne méritent à cause de leurs péchés.

ART. 6.—Elles n'auront point d'attache à aucune chose créée, particulièrement aux lieux, aux emplois, ou aux personnes, non pas même à leurs parents ou à leurs confesseurs ; et elles seront toujours prêtes à quitter tout, quand l'obéissance le leur ordonnera ; se représentant que Notre Seigneur dit que nous ne sommes pas dignes de lui, si nous ne quittons père, mère, frère, et sœur, et si nous ne renonçons à nous-mêmes et à toutes les choses de ce monde pour le suivre.

ART. 7.—Elles souffriront de bon cœur et pour l'amour de Dieu les incommodités, les moqueries, les calomnies, et autres

mortifications qui leur pourront arriver, même pour avoir bien fait, se ressouvenant que Notre Seigneur, qui était très-innocent, en a bien souffert de plus grands pour nous, priant même pour ceux qui le crucifiaient, et que tout cela n'est qu'une partie de la croix qu'il veut qu'elles portent après lui sur la terre, pour mériter d'être un jour avec lui dans le ciel.

ART. 8.—Elles auront une grande confiance à la Providence Divine, s'y abandonnant entièrement, comme un enfant à sa nourrice, et elles se persuaderont que pourvu que de leur côté elles tâchent d'être fidèles à leur vocation et à l'observance de leurs règles, Dieu les tiendra toujours en sa protection, et les assistera en ce qui leur sera nécessaire, tant pour le corps que pour l'âme, lors même qu'elles penseront que tout sera perdu.

CHAPITRE II.

ART. 1.—Elles honoreront la pauvreté de Notre Seigneur, se contentant d'avoir leurs petites nécessités, dans la simplicité ordinaire, et selon l'usage de la communauté, considérant qu'elles sont servantes des pauvres, et qu'ainsi elles doivent vivre pauvrement. Selon cela, elles mettront tout en commun, ainsi que faisaient les premiers chrétiens; en sorte que nulle d'entre elles n'aura, ni dans la maison ni dehors, aucune chose pour la garder ou en user comme propre à elle seule; et elles ne pourront disposer, ni donner, ni prêter du bien de la communauté, ni même de leur propre ou de ce qui peut leur rester après leur entretien, et beaucoup moins du bien des pauvres qui leur est confié; ni emprunter, ni acquérir, ou recevoir d'ailleurs, sans le consentement de la Supérieure, en choses petites et ordinaires; mais quant aux extraordinaires et de conséquence, il faut de plus la permission du Supérieur.

ART. 2.—Elles feront leur possible pour se mettre dans la sainte pratique tant recommandée par les saints, et si exactement observée dans les communautés bien réglées, savoir, de ne rien demander ni refuser, pour ce qui est des choses de la terre. Si l'on a pourtant une véritable nécessité de quelque chose, on le pourra proposer tout simplement et avec indifférence aux personnes à qui il appartient d'y pourvoir, et puis demeurer

en repos, soit qu'on l'accorde ou non; mais afin qu'on n'ait point occasion de manquer à cette sainte pratique, les officières et les sœurs servantes demanderont toutes les semaines les besoins de chacune en particulier, et les leur fourniront en retranchant tout le superflu.

ART. 3.—Comme elles ne doivent pas se servir sans permission de ce qui est destiné à l'usage de la communauté, ou d'une sœur en particulier, aussi ne doivent-elles pas se plaindre de se qu'on ait accommodé une autre, avec la même permission, de quelque chose dont on leur avait accordé l'usage; mais plutôt être bien aises d'avoir en cela sujet de pratiquer la sainte pauvreté et la mortification. S'il est pourtant nécessaire d'en parler, comme lorsqu'elles ont sujet de croire ou de douter, qu'on leur ait pris quelque chose sans permission, elles ne le diront point en public ni même en particulier à d'autres qu'à la Supérieure, ou à quelque officière de la communauté, ou à la sœur servante,[1] lorsque cela arrive dans quelqu'une de leurs maisons éloignées; elles se donneront encore bien garde de quitter ou changer, sans permission, les choses qu'on leur donne pour leur usage quand elles sont vieilles, ou qu'elles ne leur plaisent pas, bien loin de les jeter ou de les défaire pour les façonner selon leur inclination.

ART. 4.—Elles feront grande conscience de ne pas bien ménager l'argent et les autres choses qu'elles ont en maniement pour l'usage des sœurs, se représentant que ce serait pécher contre la vertu de pauvreté, qu'elles ont promis de pratiquer, dès qu'elles ont pris l'habit et le nom de Servantes des Pauvres; et pour empêcher les abus qui pourraient glisser en l'usage qu'elles feront de ce bien-là, particulièrement à l'égard du vêtement, comme si chacune avait la liberté d'acheter de l'étoffe et du linge et de faire ses habits, ce qui causerait un grand désordre dans la compagnie, et ruinerait la sainte uniformité qui est si nécessaire aux communautés. Celles des établissements, tant des villages que des villes, emploieront l'argent que les dames ou autres leur donneront pour leur nourriture et entretien, conformément à l'ordinaire pauvre et simple qu'on a

1 The Superior of any of the subordinate establishments was formerly thus described.

observé dès le commencement, dans leur principale maison de Paris; et celles des hôpitaux tâcheront de s'y ajuster autant qu'elles pourront, même en ceux où on leur donne la portion commune des pauvres; et tant les unes que les autres auxquelles on fournit l'argent pour leur habit et menu linge, n'achèteront aucune serge ni toile pour leur vêtement, mais en demanderont à la Supérieure en lui envoyant le prix, et lui rendant compte au moins une fois chaque année, soit de bouche, soit par écrit, de l'argent qui leur a été donné. Les sœurs servantes des établissements fort éloignés enverront à la Supérieure un échantillon de l'étoffe et de la toile qu'elles y trouvent, pour voir si elle est conforme à l'usage de la communauté, et elles suivront là-dessus sa résolution; que si elles ont besoin d'autres choses, elles ne les achèteront pas sans lui en avoir demandé auparavant la permission.

ART. 5.—Elles garderont autant qu'il se pourra l'uniformité en toutes choses, comme celle qui entretient non-seulement l'esprit de pauvreté, mais encore l'union et le bon ordre dans les communautés; et elles fuiront toute singularité, comme la source des divisions et des désordres. Pour cet effet, elles s'accommoderont en tout à la commune manière de vivre de la maison où réside la Supérieure, se conformant aux maximes et pratiques qu'on y enseigne pour la conduite tant spirituelle que temporelle sans en prendre d'autres, quoique bonnes et meilleures en apparence; quant aux nécessités du corps, elles se donneront bien de garde d'être habillées, coiffées, chaussées, couchées, nourries, meublées, autrement ni mieux que les autres. Si néanmoins quelqu'une, après y avoir pensé devant Dieu, croit avoir besoin de quelque particularité à raison de son indisposition, elle le proposera tout simplement et avec indifférence à la même Supérieure, laquelle avisera, avec le Supérieur, ce qui sera le plus expédient de faire là-dessus.

ART. 6.—Qu'elles ne doivent pas s'impatienter ni murmurer de n'être pas traitées à leur gré; elles considéreront surtout, en cette occasion, que les servantes des pauvres ne doivent pas être mieux traitées que leurs maîtres, et que ce leur est un grand bonheur de souffrir quelque chose pour l'amour de Dieu, qui veut ainsi exercer leur patience, pour augmenter

leur mérite, outre qu'elles ne savent pas si bien ce qui leur est convenable que le médecin et les infirmières, auxquels il est juste, par conséquent, qu'elles laissent le soin de leur santé.

ART. 7—Pendant qu'elles demeurent dans la maison où réside la Supérieure, elles se garderont bien d'y faire manger ni loger personne de dehors sans sa permission ; celles aussi des paroisses et des autres maisons éloignées en useront de même à l'égard de la sœur servante, laquelle ne le fera pas, ni le permettra, sans une grande nécessité, et sans une permission particulière de la même Supérieure générale, et cela seulement à l'égard des personnes de leur sexe, quand bien même il n'y aurait d'autre mal en cela, sinon que ce serait disposer d'un bien qui ne leur appartient pas, et dont elles n'ont que l'usage pour la nécessité de leurs personnes.

CHAPITRE III.

ART. 1.—Elles feront tout leur possible pour conserver parfaitement la pureté du cœur et du corps. À cet effet, elles chasseront, promptement, toutes sortes de pensées contraires à cette vertu, et fuiront soigneusement tout ce qui la pourrait en quelque façon blesser, particulièrement le désir de paraître agréables, la vanité et l'afféterie aux habits, au marcher, et au parler ; comme aussi la curiosité d'ouïr et de voir le monde, soit par les fenêtres ou allant par les rues ; la présomption de soi-même et la communication fréquente avec les externes, hors le cas d'une véritable nécessité. Enfin, elles éviteront tout ce qui pourrait donner au prochain le moindre sujet de les soupçonner tant soit peu duvice contraire ; ce seul soupçon, quoique très-mal fondé, étant plus préjudiciable à leur compagnie et à ses saints emplois que tous les autres crimes qui leur seraient faussement imputés.

ART. 2.—Et d'autant que la sainte modestie leur est non-seulement nécessaire pour édifier le prochain, mais encore pour conserver cette pureté angélique, laquelle se flétrit aisément par des actes d'immodestie, elles seront soigneuses de l'observer, en tout temps et en tout lieu ; pour cet effet elles feront attention à tenir les yeux baissés, particulièrement dans

les rues, dans les églises, dans les maisons des externes, surtout en parlant aux personnes de l'autre sexe, et même quand elles sont ensembles dans leur chambre, durant le temps des prières, des conférences, du silence, et du repas; et elles éviteront la précipitation au marcher et dans leurs actions; elles conserveront la netteté dans leurs habits et dans leurs meubles, sans aucune affectation; elles s'abstiendront aussi, même dans leurs récréations, des légèretés puériles, des ris excessifs, des discours et des gestes messéants, de tous jeux défendus ou qui portent à quelque chose de moins honnête, et elles ne se toucheront jamais l'une l'autre sans nécessité quand ce serait même par jeu ou par signe d'amitié, si ce n'est pour embrasser, en esprit de charité, celles qui sont nouvellement reçues dans la compagnie, ou qui viennent des champs, ou pour se réconcilier avec quelqu'une qu'on aurait contristée; auxquels cas il leur est permis de se baiser, mais toujours à genoux et seulement à la joue, et non pas à la bouche, ni dans les rues, ni à l'église.

ART. 3.—Quoique les continuels travaux des filles de la Charité ne leur permettent pas de faire beaucoup de pénitences et d'austérités corporelles, elles pourront néanmoins en faire quelquefois avec la permission de la Supérieure aux choses ordinaires, et du Supérieur aux extraordinaires. De plus, elles jeûneront toutes les veilles des fêtes chômées de Notre-Seigneur et de la Sainte Vierge, et tous les vendredis de l'année, excepté depuis Pâques jusque à la Pentecôte, et lorsque la fête du patron ou de la dédicace de la paroisse arrive en ce jour-là, ou qu'il y a quelqu'autre jeûne dans la même semaine. Elles feront encore abstinence tous les mercredis de l'Avent et le lundi et mardi de la Quinquagésime; mais dans tous ces jours-là, les infirmes et celles qui vont servir les malades, ou qui sont employées à d'autres pénibles travaux, pourront prendre, le matin, un morceau de pain, ou quelque petite chose, par manière de médecine, même aux jours de jeûne, savoir: en ceux de la règle avec la permission de la Supérieure, ou de l'assistante en son absence, ou de la sœur servante aux lieux eloignés; et dans ceux de l'Église avec approbation du Supérieur ou du Directeur. Au reste, elles

se persuaderont que les mortifications extérieures servent de peu si elles ne sont accompagnées des intérieures, lesquelles consistent à soumettre son jugement et sa volonté aux ordres des supérieurs, à combattre et surmonter ses passions et mauvaises inclinations, et à refuser à ses sens les satisfactions qu'ils demandent, hors le cas de nécessité.[1]

ART. 4.—Comme la communication mal réglée avec les personnes externes peut être autant préjudiciable à leur pureté qu'elle leur est avantageuse et méritoire quand elles le font par obéissance et pour s'acquitter de leurs devoirs envers les pauvres, elles ne sortiront point de la maison sans avoir eu la permission de la Supérieure, à laquelle elles diront où elles vont, et pourquoi ; et au retour se représenteront à elle et lui rendront compte de leur voyage. Celles des paroisses et des autres maisons en useront de même envers la sœur servante, laquelle avertira pareillement sa compagne avant que de sortir ; et toutes se souviendront, en cette occasion, de prendre de l'eau bénite et de se mettre à genoux dans leur chapelle ou oratoire, pour offrir à Notre Seigneur, en sortant, l'action qu'elles vont faire, et pour lui demander sa bénédiction et la grâce de ne le point offenser, comme aussi au retour, pour le remercier des grâces qu'il leur a faites, ou pour lui demander pardon des fautes qu'elles auraient commises.

ART. 5.—Elles ne feront aucune visite que dans la nécessité, et avec la permission de la Supérieure ou de la sœur servante ; et si elles sont quelquefois obligées d'aller parler à quelque magistrat, administrateur, ou autre personne semblable, elles iront toujours deux ensemble, en sorte que la compagnie ne perdra jamais sa sœur de vue ; que si elles ne peuvent être accompagnées d'une de leurs sœurs, elles prendront quelque fille de l'école ou quelque femme du voisinage, qu'elles prieront de ne les point quitter.

ART. 6.—(*Missing.*)

ART. 7.—Si quelques personnes du dehors les viennent visiter, elles ne leur parleront point, ni ne leur feront parler à

1 "Les mortifications extérieures consistent en autant de choses qu'il y en a de pénibles au corps, comme coucher sur la dure, porter la haire ou le cilice, prendre la discipline, bref toutes les choses qui peuvent affliger le corps."—*Conférences.*

aucune sœur, qu'après en avoir eu la permission de la Supérieure ou de la sœur servante ; et pour lors, elles iront leur parler à la porte, ou en quelque autre lieu proche, s'il y en a un destiné pour recevoir les personnes du dehors ; mais elles ne les feront point entrer plus avant dans le corps de logis, et encore moins dans leur chambre, sans un ordre du Supérieur, quoique ce fussent des personnes de leur sexe qui demanderaient à voir la maison. Elles n'y feront pas même entrer les prêtres ni leurs confesseurs, si ce n'est quand elles sont malades, auquel cas il y aura toujours au moins une sœur présente, en quelqu'endroit assez proche d'où elle les puisse voir ; et elles observeront la même précaution à l'égard du médecin, apothicaire, chirurgien ou autres, qui auront permission de les visiter dans leurs maladies. Elles n'iront point, à plus forte raison, visiter leur confesseurs ou autres prêtres chez eux, si ce n'est qu'ils soient fort malades, cars alors elles y peuvent aller, mais toujours deux ensemble. Et si, hors de ce cas-là, il est nécessaire qu'elles leur parlent, ce sera dans l'église, ou à l'entrée de la maison, en présence de témoins, et jamais à heure indue ; que s'il arrivait par hasard, qu'elles se trouvassent seules avec quelque homme que ce fût, elles ne s'arrêteront pas un moment avec lui, à moins que les portes ne soient ouvertes.

ART. 8.—Elles ne doivent pas témoigner trop de cordialité ni de complaisance en parlant à qui que ce soit, particulièrement aux personnes de l'autre sexe, coupant court avec eux, quoique leur entretien fût des choses de piété ou de ce qui regarde le soulagement des pauvres ou de quelque autre chose utile. Pour ce sujet elles ne se feront point enseigner à écrire par des hommes, et surtout elles ne souffriront jamais qu'aucun les embrasse ni les touche, sous quelque prétexte que ce soit.

ART. 9.—Quand elles iront par les rues ou dans les maisons où elles auront affaire, pour le service des pauvres, elles ne s'arrêteront point avec les externes sans grande nécessité, et pour lors elles tâcheront de satisfaire à leurs demandes en peu de mots, détournant prudemment par quelque bon discours les nouvelles du monde si on leur en disait, et elles se donneront bien de garde de s'en informer jamais curieusement, non seulement des externes, mais même de leurs sœurs ; comme aussi

des affaires particulières des familles, quoique sous prétexte de consoler les pauvres, cela étant fort contraire à l'esprit de dévotion et au bon exemple qu'elles doivent au prochain.

ART. 10.—La sobriété et le bon ordre qu'on garde à prendre sa réfection contribuant beaucoup à la santé, tant de l'âme que du corps, et particulièrement à la conservation de la pureté, elles feront leur possible pour se conformer en cela au règlement qui s'observe en la maison de la Supérieure, soit pour la quantité et la qualité des viandes et de la boisson, soit pour les temps et les lieux auxquels on en use ; si pourtant quelqu'une a besoin de boire ou de manger hors les repas, ou hors la maison, ou de prendre quelque nourriture extraordinaire, elle en demandera la permission à la même Supérieure ou à la sœur servante du lieu où elle sera ; mais on n'accordera à aucune l'usage du vin sans une expresse permission du Supérieur de la compagnie.

CHAPITRE IV.

ART. 1.—Elles rendront honneur et obéissance, selon leur institut, à nos seigneurs les évêques, dans les diocèses desquelles elles sont établies, et elles obéiront aussi au Supérieur général de la mission, comme étant Supérieur de leur compagnie, et à ceux qu'il aura désignés pour les diriger ou visiter, à la Supérieure, et en son absence, à la sœur assistante et aux autres officières de la maison, en tout ce qui concerne leurs offices, comme aussi aux sœurs servantes qui leur sont données dans les paroisses et autres lieux où elles sont établies, aux sœurs officières des hôpitaux, et à celles qui ont la conduite des autres dans les voyages. Elles obéiront même, sans aucun retardement, au son de la cloche, comme à la voix de Notre Seigneur, qui les appelle aux exercices de la communauté.

ART. 2.—Elles s'étudieront surtout à une obéissance ponctuelle, avec soumission de jugement et de volonté, en toutes choses où l'on ne voit point de péché, et à l'égard de toutes sortes de Supérieurs et d'officières, tant imparfaites et désagréables que parfaites et agréables, se souvenant que ce n'est pas tant aux personnes qu'on obéit qu'à Notre Seigneur Jésus-

Christ, qui ordonne par leur bouche, et qui dit lui-même à ceux qui ont charge des autres, "Qui vous écoute, m'écoute; qui vous méprise, me méprise."

ART. 3.—Lorsqu'elles seront envoyées dans quelque paroisse pour y demeurer et servir les pauvres malades, la sœur servante accompagnée d'une de ses sœurs ira recevoir à genoux la bénédiction de monsieur le curé; et tandis qu'elles seront dans la paroisse elles lui rendront toutes sortes d'honneur et de respect, et même d'obéissance dans l'assistance des malades, particulièrement en ce qui regarde les secours spirituels; elles porteront aussi un grand respect à tous les autres ecclésiastiques, mais particulièrement à ceux qui leur sont donnés pour les confesser, comme aux confesseurs des pauvres, les regardant toujours presqu'avec la même vénération que lorsqu'ils sont au saint autel, et se soumettant à leurs ordres et avis en tout ce qui n'est pas péché, ni contraire au règles et pratiques de leur compagnie, ni contre l'intention de leurs Supérieurs. Que si quelqu'un d'eux ne s'acquittait pas bien de son devoir envers les malades, elles ne se donneront pas la liberté de le reprendre, mais prieront monsieur le curé de l'en avertir.

ART. 4.—Elles rendront, de plus, honneur et obéissance, en ce qui regarde le service des pauvres, à messieurs les administrateurs des hôpitaux où elles sont établies, et aux dames de charité des paroisses, qui sont en charge, savoir: à chacun selon son office, conformément au règlement du lieu et aux règles de leur compagnie. Elles obéiront encore à messieurs les médecins, accomplissant ponctuellement leurs ordonnances, tant à l'égard des pauvres que de leurs sœurs malades, lesquelles obéiront aussi au médecin et à l'infirmière, en tout ce qui regarde leurs offices, et qui n'est point contraire à leurs règles.

ART. 5.—Elles n'ouvriront point les lettres ni les billets qu'on leur écrit sans permission de la Supérieure, qui les doit lire auparavant. Elles n'en écriront point sans la même permission, et mettront entre ses mains celles qu'elles auront écrites pour les voir et envoyer ou retenir comme elle le trouvera bon. Les sœurs compagnes qui sont éloignées de la maison de la Supérieure en useront de même à l'égard de la sœur servante,

à laquelle appartient d'ouvrir ou de lire les lettres qui s'adressent soit à elle, soit à ses sœurs.

Art. 6.—Chacune saura pourtant que la précédente règle n'oblige pas à montrer les lettres qu'on écrit au Supérieur ou au Directeur, ou à la Supérieure, non plus que celle qu'on reçoit de leur part, lesquelles on ne doit pas montrer aux externes, ni même à ses sœurs, se contentant de leur dire de bouche les choses dont il est à-propos qu'elles aient connaissance. Elles sauront aussi que toutes les lettres que les sœurs servantes ou leurs compagnes écrivent, soit aux externes, soit aux particulières de leur compagnie, doivent être adressées à la Supérieure sans autre cachet que celui de l'enveloppe, lorsqu'elles sont envoyées au lieu où elle réside, ou qu'elles doivent y passer.

Chapitre V.

Art. 1.—Elles penseront souvent au nom de filles de la Charité qu'elles ont l'honneur de porter, et tâcheront de s'en rendre dignes par un véritable et sincère amour envers Dieu et envers le prochain ; surtout elles s'entrechériront et respecteront comme sœurs, que Notre Seigneur a unies ensemble, pour son service, par une particulière profession des œuvres de charité, et feront tout leur possible pour conserver entre elles une parfaite union. Pour cet effet, elles chasseront promptement de leur cœur tous les sentiments d'aversion et d'envie contre leurs sœurs, et se donneront de garde de leur dire aucune parole rude et fâcheuse ; mais elles se comporteront ensemble avec une douceur chrétienne et une cordialité respectueuse, qui doit toujours paraître sur leur visage et dans leurs paroles.

Art. 2.—Elles supporteront volontiers leurs compagnes dans leurs imperfections, ainsi qu'elles voudraient être supportées dans les leurs, et s'accommoderont autant qu'il se pourra à leurs humeurs et sentiments, en toutes les choses qui ne sont pas péché ni contre les règles, faisant surtout une attention particulière à témoigner toujours une grande charité à celles dont l'humeur a moins de sympathie avec la leur, car cette

ainte condescendance, avec le support, est un excellent moyen pour entretenir l'union et la paix dans la communauté.

Art. 3.—S'il arrivait, par infirmité humaine, qu'une sœur eût donné sujet de mortification à une autre, elle ne manquera pas de lui en demander pardon à genoux, sur le champ, ou, pour le plus tard, au soir avant de se coucher; et l'autre recevra humblement et de bon cœur l'humiliation de sa sœur, et se mettra aussi à genoux; cette sainte pratique étant un souverain remède pour guérir promptement l'amertume du cœur et le ressentiment qui aurait pu rester de la faute commise; mais pour ne pas empêcher l'effet salutaire de cette sainte pratique, celle qui aura été offensée se donnera bien de garde de prendre occasion de l'humiliation de sa sœur, pour satisfaire l'inclination de la nature, en exagérant sa faute, ou lui disant des paroles rudes et de reproche, quoiqu'elle fût tombée souvent dans une pareille faute.

Art. 4.—Et d'autant que la trop grande tendresse sur soi-même, qui est fort contraire à la charité bien réglée et au soin modéré de sa santé, pourrait souvent porter les sœurs, particulièrement celles des paroisses, à dire leurs petits maux au médecin des pauvres, lequel les mettant aisément aux remèdes les exposerait au danger de ruiner leur santé au lieu de la leur procurer; elles n'useront d'aucun médicament ni de saignée pour leurs personnes, ni ne consulteront le médecin ou autre personne de semblable profession, pour le même effet, sans la permission de la Supérieure, savoir: pour celles qui sont auprès d'elles ou dans les paroisses de la ville où elle réside, si ce n'est que le mal pressât trop, comme apoplexie, hémorrhagie, etc. Mais quelle que soit la maladie, elles en donneront toujours avis à la même Supérieure, le deuxième ou troisième jour au plus tard. Pour celles qui sont éloignées, il faudra demander cette permission à la sœur servante, laquelle ne le permettra pas, si elle n'y voit de la nécessité, et tâchera elle-même de donner l'exemple aux autres dans la pratique de cette règle; et toutes, après leur guérison, reprendront volontiers le travail commun, sans prétendre d'user plus longtemps des dispenses particulières qu'on leur avait accordées pendant leur maladie.

Chapitre VI.

Art. 1.—Quoiqu'elles doivent avoir un grand amour les unes envers les autres, elles se garderont pourtant soigneusement des amitiés particulières, qui sont d'autant plus dangereuses qu'elles paraissent alors moins l'être, parcequ'on les couvre d'ordinaire du manteau de la charité, encore qu'elles ne soient en effet qu'une affection déréglée de la chair et du sang; c'est pourquoi elles les fuiront autant et même plus que les aversions, ces deux extrémités vicieuses étant capables de perdre en peu de temps toute une compagnie.

Art. 2.—Pour retrancher l'occasion des murmures, qui ne sont pas moins préjudiciables à la paix et union d'une communauté que les deux vices précédents (l'amour et la haine), et qui naissent d'ordinaire de la curiosité de savoir tout ce qui s'y passe sous un faux zèle du bien commun; elles ne s'enquêteront point ni ne parleront point de la conduite de la compagnie pour y trouver à redire, et encore moins pour s'en plaindre; mais si la chose leur paraît de quelque conséquence, elles en diront humblement et simplement leur pensée au Supérieur, ou à la Supérieure, sans s'en mettre davantage en peine, se donnant bien de garde de murmurer jamais de leur conduite ou du procédé de la sœur servante; toutes ces sortes de murmures étant une source de scandales et de divisions qui attirent la malédiction de Dieu, non-seulement sur les personnes qui les font, mais encore sur celles qui les écoutent avec complaisance et même sur toute la compagnie.

Art. 3.—Elles se donneront bien de garde dans leurs conversations de s'entretenir jamais des défauts du prochain, particulièrement de leurs sœurs, ni de rapporter à la maison ce qu'elles auront appris du dehors, si ce n'est aux Supérieurs; mais si quelqu'une d'entre elles oubliait jusque là son devoir que de tenir de tels discours, contraires à la charité, devant les sœurs, les autres, bien loin de l'écouter, feront leur possible pour l'empêcher de continuer, se mettant à genoux devant elle, si besoin est, pour la prier de cesser, et si elle ne s'arrêtait pas encore pour cela, elles se retireront promptement, comme si elles entendaient le sifflement d'un serpent.

Chapitre VII.

Art. 1.—Leur principal emploi étant de servir les pauvres malades, elles s'en acquitteront avec tout le soin et toute l'affection qui leur sera possible ; considérant que ce n'est pas tant à eux qu'à Jésus-Christ qu'elles rendent service. Dans cette vue elles leur porteront elles-mêmes la nourriture et les remèdes, les traitant avec compassion, douceur, cordialité, respect, et dévotion, même les plus fâcheux, et ceux pour lesquelles elles sentiront quelque répugnance ou moins d'inclination ; elles feront grande conscience de les laisser souffrir, faute de leur donner précisément au temps et en la manière convenable les secours dont ils ont besoin, soit par quelque négligence ou oubliance coupable, soit par quelque attache mal réglée à leurs exercices spirituels, qu'elles doivent postposer à l'assistance nécessaire des pauvres malades.

Art. 2.—Elles n'oublieront pas de leur dire, de fois à autre, quelques bons mots pour les disposer à la patience, ou à faire une bonne confession générale, ou à bien mourir, ou à bien vivre. Elles auront particulièrement soin de leur enseigner les choses nécessaires au salut, et de procurer qu'ils reçoivent de bonne heure tous les sacrements, et même plus d'une fois, si après leur convalescence ils retombent malades ; le tout en la manière et selon l'ordre qui leur en est prescrit dans les règles particulières de leurs offices envers les malades.

Art. 3.—Et d'autant que la charité mal-ordonnée est non-seulement désagréable à Dieu, mais encore préjudiciable à l'âme de ceux qui la pratiquent de la sorte, elles n'entreprendront jamais de nourrir ni médicamenter aucun malade contre la volonté des personnes dont elles dépendent, ni contre l'ordre qui leur en a été donné ; sans s'arrêter aux plaintes que les pauvres mécontents sont accoutumés de faire, lesquels pourtant elles tâcheront de consoler et satisfaire le mieux qu'elles pourront, leur témoignant de la compassion pour leurs maux, et du regret de ne les pouvoir assister selon leur désir, et excitant de tout leur possible les dames de la Charité et autres à leur faire le plus de bien qu'il se pourra.

Art. 4.—Elles auront grand soin des sœurs malades, particulièrement hors de la maison de la Supérieure; pour cet effet elles les regarderont comme servantes de Jésus-Christ, en ce qu'elles sont servantes de ses membres, les pauvres; et comme leurs propres sœurs, en tant qu'elles sont toutes, d'une manière particulière, filles d'un même Père qui est Dieu, et d'une même mère qui est leur compagnie, et dans cette vue elles leur rendront service avec toute l'affection et toute l'exactitude qui leur sera possible; elles auront surtout un soin particulier d'avertir de bonne heure le confesseur lorsqu'une sœur est malade, et de lui procurer tous les sacrements et autres assistances spirituelles dont elle aura besoin; mais pour ce qui est du traitement du corps, elles observeront ce qui leur est prescrit au chapitre deuxième, article sixième, de la pauvreté.

Chapitre VIII.

Arts. 1, 2, 3 et 4.—(*Missing.*)

Art. 5.—Tous les vendredis, excepté le Vendredi Saint, et ceux où il arrive quelque fête chômée, elles s'assembleront, à sept heures et demie, pour faire les prières et assister ensuite à la petite conférence que tient la Supérieure, ou celle qui la représente, touchant les manquements commis contre les règles, afin de s'en corriger. Pour cet effet, chacun y dira sa coulpe, en présence des autres, en la manière accoutumée, recevra de bon cœur les avis et les pénitences qu'on lui donnera, et demandera pardon à celle à qui elle pourrait avoir donné quelque sujet de mortification ou de mauvais exemple; chacune se souviendra encore de demander, une fois le mois, d'être avertie publiquement des fautes qu'on aura remarquées en elle, ce que les autres feront en esprit d'humilité et de charité, sans jamais avertir des fautes qui auraient été commises contre elle en particulier; et les sœurs qu'on avertira de leurs défauts recevront cette grâce avec humilité et désir de se corriger, sans se justifier, ni témoigner aucune peine des avertissements qu'on leur aura faits; celles qui demeureront dans les paroisses et autres établissements observeront le même, en présence de leur sœur servante.

ART. 6.—Pour empêcher quelques grands inconvénients qui perdraient enfin la compagnie, si chacune avait la liberté de décharger son cœur à qui elle voudrait, elles ne communiqueront point leurs tentations et autres peines intérieures à leurs sœurs, et encore moins aux personnes externes, mais s'adresseront au Supérieur ou directeur député de sa part, ou à la Supérieure, et au besoin à la sœur servante, Dieu les ayant destinés pour cela, et non pas les autres ; si pourtant quelqu'une pense devant Dieu avoir besoin de se communiquer ou demander avis à quelque personne de dehors, elle le pourra faire, mais ce ne sera pas sans la permission du Supérieur ou du directeur, ou de la Supérieure, de peur qu'en faisant autrement Dieu ne permette qu'on lui donne un mauvais conseil en punition de sa désobéissance.

ART. 7.—Surtout elles seront soigneuses de taire les choses qui obligent au secret, et entre autres ce que l'on dit ou ce qu'on fait aux conférences, communications, et confessions, étant certain qu'outre l'offense qu'on commet contre Dieu en révélant le secret, on fait que toutes ces pratiques deviennent odieuses, inutiles, et même quelquefois nuisibles à plusieurs. Il n'est pas pourtant défendu de s'entretenir de quelque bon mot que le Supérieur ou le directeur ou une sœur aura dit, pourvu que ce soit pour édifier les autres, et sans dire où on l'a appris, particulièrement si c'a été dans la confession ; mais il n'est jamais permis d'en parler par récréation et encore moins par manière de plainte ou de murmure. Elles ne communiqueront point aussi leurs règles à aucun externe, sans une permission expresse du Supérieur ou du directeur de leur compagnie, et la sœur servante les tiendra enfermées sous clef dans la chambre, sans les porter hors la maison, ni les laisser exposées à la vue des personnes du dehors, ni en tirer aucune copie.

ART. 8.—Comme le Supérieur et la Supérieure ne sauraient remédier aux défauts qui peuvent arriver dans la communauté, si celles qui en ont connaissance ne leur en donnent avis, et que, faute de cela, la communauté serait en danger de dé-

choir avec le temps, chacune sera soigneuse d'avertir humblement et charitablement le Supérieur ou directeur ou la Supérieure, ou même, dans la nécessité pressante, la sœur servante, des fautes de quelque conséquence ou des tentations dangereuses qu'elle aura remarquées en ses sœurs, et sera contente que ses défauts soient pareillement découverts au même Supérieur et à la Supérieure, recevant de bon cœur et sans s'excuser les avertissements qui lui seront faits, tant en public qu'en particulier ; et se donneront bien de garde d'user jamais des reproches ni témoigner de mécontentement à ceux ou celles qu'on pourrait croire avoir donné connaissance des défauts dont on a reçu l'avertissement.

Chapitre IX.

Règles sur l'emploi de la journée.

Art. 1.—À quatre heures, elles se léveront au premier son de la cloche, faisant le signe de la croix, et donnant leur première pensée à Dieu. Elles s'habilleront avec diligence et modestie, prenant au moins leurs premiers habits sous les rideaux de leur lit, et dès qu'elles en seront revêtues, elles prendront de l'eau bénite, et se mettront à genoux pour adorer Dieu, le remercier, s'offrir à lui, et toutes les actions de la journée, puis elles feront promptement leur lit, et achèveront de s'habiller.

Art. 2.—À quatre heures et demie, elles feront en commun leurs prières, qu'elles commenceront par le *Veni Sancte Spiritus* et les cinq actes ordinaires de l'exercice du matin :[1] ensuite elles entendront lire les points de la méditation qu'elles feront jusqu'à cinq heures et un quart, et finiront par l'Angelus et les litanies du Saint Nom de Jésus et autres prières accoutumées, après quoi elles commenceront leur chapelet, dont elles diront une dizaine, puis feront la répétition de l'oraison jusqu'à six heures.[2]

1 "Ces actes sont les actes de foi, d'espérance, de charité, d'action de grâces et d'offrande."—*Note by M. de Pistoye.*

2 "St. Vincent expliqua ensuite quelle était la méthode de St. François de Sales. L'oraison, d'après ce saint, se subdivise en trois points : la préparation, le corps d'oraison, et la conclusion ; chacun de ces points se subdivise en trois parties. ["La

ART. 3.—À six heures, elles s'appliqueront en silence à ce qu'elles auront à faire de plus pressé, chacune selon son office, ainsi qu'il leur sera prescrit; et à six heures et demie, elles auront permission d'apprendre à lire, s'y emploieront jusqu'à sept heures ou environ.

ART. 4.—À sept heures environ, elles iront ensemble à la messe, deux à deux, si elles le peuvent alors, sinon ce sera à quelqu'autre heure plus commode et tour à tour, selon que la Supérieure ou la sœur servante le jugeront à-propos, et en attendant que la messe commence, ou depuis qu'elle est commencée jusqu'à l'Évangile, elles diront quelques dizaines de leur chapelet.

ART. 5.—Après la messe, elles iront toutes ensemble déjeûner au réfectoire, où elles prendront seulement un morceau de pain, si ce n'est que la Supérieure, ou quelque autre officière ou la sœur servante, juge à-propos de faire donner à quelques-unes, à cause de leur infirmité ou caducité, ou grande fatigue de travail, quelque chose pour manger avec leur pain; mais toutes garderont cependant le silence: celles qui ne pourront ouïr la messe que bien tard ne feront pas de difficulté, aux jours ouvriers, de déjeûner avant d'y aller; mais passé neuf heures et demie, aucune ne déjeûnera sans la permission de la Supérieure ou de la sœur servante.[1]

"La préparation se subdivise en trois parties: (1) la mise en la présence de Dieu; (2) l'invocation de l'assistance de Dieu; (3) la représentation du sujet de la méditation. On peut se mettre en la présence de Dieu en quatre manières: (1) en se représentant Notre Seigneur au très-saint Sacrement de l'autel; (2) en se représentant Dieu au ciel; . . (3) en le regardant présent partout; . . . . (4) enfin, en se représentant que Dieu est dans une bonne âme qui est pleine de son amour. . . . La seconde partie de l'oraison, appelée *corps de l'oraison*, se subdivise en trois points, qui consistent (1) à méditer sur la lecture, (2) à raisonner sur ce qu'a dit l'auteur, (3) à rechercher les fins auxquelles tend le sujet de l'oraison. . . . Le troisième point du corps de l'oraison comprend les résolutions. . . . La conclusion de l'oraison se subdivise, comme les deux premières parties, en trois points, qui consistent (1) à rendre grâce à Dieu, (2) à lui offrir nos résolutions, (3) à nous proposer de faire le bien avec le secours de sa grâce."—*Conférences.*

[1] "Il faut principalement, avant d'aller voir vos malades, que vous déjeûniez, et cela à cause du mauvais air qu'on respire, et même avant la messe si vous ne pouvez l'entendre que tard; car quoique ce soit une bienséance et même un acte de piété de l'entendre à jeûne, les personnes de travail comme vous ne doivent pas prendre garde à cela."—*Conférences.*

Art. 6.—Après le déjeûner chacune reprendra son emploi, et si elles travaillent ensemble, elles pourront s'entretenir de quelque chose de piété d'une manière sérieuse et non par forme de récréation.

Art. 7.—À onze heures et demie, elles feront l'examen particulier, l'espace d'un *Miserere* ou deux, s'arrêtant sur les résolutions qu'elles ont prises le matin, et particulièrement sur les actes de la vertu qu'elles ont pour pratique;[1] ensuite, ayant dit le *Benedicite* que la Supérieure commence et les autres poursuivent, elles dîneront chacune ayant sa portion à part, et cependant elles écouteront attentivement la lecture spirituelle qu'une d'entre elles fera, la finissant par celle du martyrologe pour le jour suivant. Elles diront l'Angelus en même temps qu'il sonnera, quoiqu'elles n'aient pas encore achevé de dîner, et s'étant levées de table, elles diront les grâces de la même manière que le *Benedicite*, puis elles diront une dizaine du chapelet. Dans les paroisses où, n'étant que deux, on ne peut faire la lecture durant le dîner, elles la feront immédiatement avant le repas, pendant lequel elles s'occuperont intérieurement et en silence de ce qui aura été lu.

Art. 8.—Après le dîner, elles s'appliqueront s'il est besoin chacune à son office, sinon elles travailleront ensemble à filer ou à coudre, et pourront cependant s'entretenir une heure de quelque chose d'édifiant par manière de récréation gaie et modeste, se souvenant d'élever souvent leur cœur à Dieu; et si l'on s'échappait à quelque immodestie ou entretien illicite, une sœur à ce destinée dira: Souvenons-nous de la présence de Dieu.

Art. 9.—À deux heures, après avoir dit le *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, une sœur fera tout haut, durant un quart d'heure, la lecture spirituelle, qu'elle finira par ces paroles: *Deus charitas est, et qui manet in charitate in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.* Les autres écouteront cette lecture en travaillant, et continueront leur travail dans un grand silence jusqu'à trois heures, appliquant cependant leur esprit à quelque bonne pensée ou à l'instruction qu'on fait au même lieu, durant ce temps-là, aux sœurs qui sont dans la maison où réside la Supérieure, pour

[1] "C'est-à-dire, qu'elles ont résolu ou qu'on leur a ordonné de pratiquer." —*Note by M. de Pistoye.*

leur apprendre les devoirs de bonnes chrétiennes et de vraies filles de la Charité, à quoi elles tâcheront d'assister quand leurs occupations le leur permettront.

Art. 10.—À trois heures, elles se mettront à genoux, et une sœur dira tout haut ces paroles : *Christus factus est pro nobis obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis, propter quod Deus et exaltavit illum.* Et toutes ensemble adoreront le fils de Dieu mourant pour le salut de nos âmes, et s'offriront au Père Éternel dans ce moment où il rendit l'esprit, le priant d'appliquer le mérite de sa mort particulièrement à ceux qui sont dans l'agonie ou en état de péché, et à toutes les âmes détenues dans le purgatoire. Ayant fait cet acte durant l'espace de trois *Pater* et *Ave*, elles baiseront la terre et se relèveront aussitôt. Celles qui tiennent l'école feront cet acte avant que d'y entrer, et celles qui se trouveront à cette heure-là avec quelque externe, ou dans les rues, feront seulement en esprit le même acte, sans se mettre à genoux ; mais celles qui n'auront pas pu du tout s'y appliquer pour lors le feront à la première commodité.

Art. 11.—Après l'acte d'adoration, si elles doivent continuer ensemble leur travail, elles pourront s'entretenir de quelque chose d'édification, mais plus sérieusement et d'une voix plus basse qu'après le dîner, le temps de la récréation étant passé. Celles qui auront permission d'apprendre à écrire pourront y employer au plus une demi-heure de l'après-midi, au temps que la Supérieure ou la sœur servante jugeront propre pour cela, et entièrement libre de toute autre occupation nécessaire, et chacune s'appliquera en telle sorte à cet exercice qu'elle soit toujours disposée à l'interrompre, ou de s'en abstenir tout à fait aux jours que la même Supérieure ou la sœur servante jugeront empêchés par quelque emploi d'obligation plus étroite, afin que cela ne préjudicie nullement au service des pauvres ni à aucun des devoirs de leur compagnie.

Art. 12.—À cinq heures et demie, elles feront l'oraison jusqu'à six si elles ne l'ont pas faite quelque temps auparavant, ainsi qu'on l'observe dans les hôpitaux. Ensuite elles feront l'examen particulier comme avant le dîner, puis iront souper disant le *Benedicite* et les grâces, faisant la lecture de

table sans lire le martyrologe, disant ensuite l'Angelus avec une ou deux dizaines du chapelet, et observant le reste de ce qui a été dit en parlant du dîner.

ART. 13.—Après le souper elles s'emploieront, s'il est besoin, aux choses de leur office, sinon elles travailleront ensemble, et observeront ce qui est marqué pour la récréation d'après dîner.

ART. 14.—À huit heures, au son de la cloche, elles s'assembleront pour l'exercice du soir, au même lieu où elles font ordinairement la lecture de deux heures, et la Supérieure ou la sœur servante ayant dit le *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, chacune reprendra son travail, et écoutera cependant la lecture des deux premiers points de la méditation, que la sœur qui est en semaine fait tout haut ; ensuite en attendant que le quart sonne, la Supérieure ou la sœur servante fera répéter à quelques-unes ce qu'elles ont remarqué, ou bien elle dira un mot sur le sujet proposé pour faciliter la méditation aux nouvelles ; mais les samedis et les veilles des fêtes, on réservera la lecture de la méditation après les prières, et l'on fera pour lors la lecture de l'Évangile du jour suivant, que toutes entendront à genoux, et puis se remettront à leurs places et reprendront leur travail. S'il arrive une fête au dimanche, on lira seulement l'Évangile de la fête que l'Église célèbre ce jour-là.

ART. 15.—À huit heures un quart, elles iront à la chapelle ou oratoire faire l'examen général et les prières ordinaires, après lesquelles on relira seulement le premier point de la méditation si on en a déjà lu deux avant les prières, puis elles se retireront en silence et se disposeront au coucher ; et après avoir pris de l'eau bénite et fait quelque prières durant deux ou trois *Pater* au plus, elles se coucheront modestement, chacune se déshabillant hors la vue des autres, et tenant les rideaux du lit abaissés durant la nuit ; elles tâcheront de s'endormir en quelque bonne pensée, particulièrement sur le sujet de l'oraison du lendemain, et feront en sorte qu'elles soient couchées et que les lumières soient éteintes à neuf heures.

ART. 16.—Aux dimanches et aux fêtes elles garderont le même ordre qu'aux autres jours, à la réserve des choses suivantes :—

(1) Elles emploieront le temps ci-dessus marqué pour le

travail manuel en des exercices spirituels, tels que sont l'usage des sacrements, l'assistance au service divin, au sermon, au catéchisme ou à des entretiens de piété, la lecture des livres de dévotion désignés par la Supérieure ou autre députée de sa part, la pratique du catéchisme entre elles, pour se rendre capables d'instruire les pauvres et les enfants des choses nécessaires à leur salut, et autres semblables exercices conformes à leur état.

(2) Celles qui ont permission d'apprendre à lire ou à écrire meploieront pour cela une demi-heure le matin, au temps le plus commode, et autant après dîner, pourvu que cela ne les détourne point du service des pauvres ou de quelque autre emploi d'obligation.

(3) Elles ne laisseront pas de prendre en ces jours-là leur petite récréation ordinaire après le repas, selon le temps qu'elles auront de reste, mais elles ne joueront jamais à des jeux défendus ou peu séants à leur état.

ART. 17.—Outre les exercices ci-dessus marqués, qui sont communs à toutes, les sœurs nouvelles observeront les suivants, qui leur sont propres durant le temps de leur épreuve dans la maison de la Supérieure :—

(1) Chaque jour, à huit heures du matin, elles entendront la lecture spirituelle qu'on leur fera durant un quart d'heure, et ensuite l'instruction jusqu'à la demie.

(2) À deux heures après avoir entendu la lecture, elles assisteront soigneusement à l'instruction qu'on leur fera jusqu'à trois heures.

(3) Tous les mercredis, elles auront une conférence semblable à celle qu'on fait le vendredi au soir à toute la communauté ; et même les sœurs nouvelles que sont dans les paroisses de Paris viendront pour cet objet à la maison de la Supérieure, si leurs obligations envers les pauvres le leur permettent. Elles n'y viendront pas néanmoins pour les deux autres exercices qu'on y fait chaque jour à huit heures et à deux ; mais les sœurs servantes avec qui elles demeurent tâcheront d'y suppléer lorsqu'elles le pourront, leur faisant quelques instructions semblables à celles qu'on fait à la maison, à quoi les anciennes qui se trouvent au même lieu assisteront

si leurs occupations le leur permettent, tant pour l'utilité spirituelle qu'elles en peuvent retirer, que pour le bon exemple qu'elles doivent donner à leurs sœurs.

Art. 18.—Elles feront toutes un grand état de leurs règles, des saintes pratiques et louables coutumes qu'elles ont gardées jusqu'à maintenant, les considérant comme les moyens que Dieu leur a donnés pour s'avancer à la perfection convenable à leur état, et pour faire plus aisément leur salut ; c'est pourquoi elles les liront et entendront lire avec celles de leurs offices une fois chaque mois, autant qu'elles le pourront commodément, et demanderont pardon à Dieu des fautes qu'elles remarqueront y avoir commises, tâchant de concevoir en même temps de nouveaux désirs de les observer entièrement jusqu'à la mort. Que s'il s'en trouvent quelques-unes qui répugnent à leur esprit ou sentiment particulier, elles tâcheront de se vaincre et mortifier, en cela se représentant que Notre Seigneur a dit, "Que le royaume des cieux souffre violence, et que ceux qui se font force le ravissent."

Art. final.—Encore que leur vocation requiert qu'elles s'étudient toute leur vie à pratiquer toutes sortes de vertus pour imiter leur patron Jésus-Christ, elles feront néanmoins une attention particulière à celles qui sont représentées par les quatre extrémités de la croix, savoir : l'humilité, la charité, l'obéissance, et la patience ; c'est pourquoi elles feront en sorte que toutes leurs actions en soient animées, et se représenteront que c'est en vain qu'elles ont toujours sur elles une croix matérielle, si elles n'en usent ainsi.

RÈGLES PARTICULIÈRES AUX SŒURS DES PAROISSES.

Art. 1.—Elles se représenteront que, comme leurs emplois les obligent d'être la plupart du temps hors de la maison, et parmi le monde, et souvent seules, elles ont besoin d'une plus grande perfection que celles qui sont employées dans les hôpitaux et autres semblables lieux, d'où elles ne sortent que rarement ; c'est pourquoi elles s'étudieront d'une manière toute particulière à s'avancer dans les vertus qui leur sont recommandées par leurs règles communes, mais particulière-

ment dans une profonde humilité, une exacte obéissance, une parfaite union entre elles, un grand détachement des créatures et une continuelle précaution pour conserver parfaitement la pureté du corps et du cœur.

ART. 2.—Elles penseront souvent à la fin principale pour laquelle Dieu les a envoyées en la paroisse où elles sont, qui est de servir les pauvres malades, non-seulement corporellement en leur administrant la nourriture et les médicaments, mais encore spirituellement en procurant qu'ils reçoivent dignement et de bonne heure tous les sacrements, et entre autres celui de la confession, dès le premier ou le deuxième jour de leur reception à la Charité, en sorte que ceux qui tendront à la mort partent de ce monde en bon état, et que ceux qui guériront fassent une forte résolution de bien vivre à l'avenir.

ART. 3.—Les secours spirituels qu'elles tâcheront de leur donner, selon leur petit pouvoir et la disposition des malades, seront principalement de les consoler et encourager et de les instruire des choses nécessaires à leur salut, leur faisant faire des actes de foi, d'espérance et de charité envers Dieu et le prochain, de contrition de leurs péchés, de réconciliation avec leurs ennemis, de demande de pardon à ceux qu'ils ont offensés, de résignation au bon plaisir de Dieu, soit pour souffrir, soit pour guérir, soit pour vivre, et autres semblables actes qu'elles doivent leur suggérer, non pas tous à la fois, mais quelques-uns chaque jour, et fort succinctement, de peur de les ennuyer.

ART. 4.—Surtout elles se donneront à Dieu pour les disposer à faire une bonne confession générale de toute leur vie, particulièrement si la maladie est dangereuse, leur en faisant connaître l'importance, et leur enseignant la manière de la bien faire, leur disant, entre autres choses, qu'ils ne rendront pas seulement compte des péchés commis depuis leur dernière confession, mais encore de tous les autres qu'ils ont jamais faits, tant confessés qu'oubliés. Que s'ils ne sont pas en état de faire cette confession de toute leur vie, elles les exciteront au moins à concevoir une contrition générale de tous leurs péchés, et une forte résolution de plutôt mourir que de les commettre à l'avenir, moyennant la grâce de Dieu.

Art. 5.—Si les malades reviennent en convalescence, et puis retombent une ou plusieurs fois dans leur maladie, elles les exhorteront à recevoir derechef les sacrements, même celui de l'extrême onction, et auront soin de leur procurer ce grand bien. Si elles se trouvent à leur dernier passage, elles les aideront à bien mourir, en leur faisant faire courtement quelques-uns des actes susdits, priant pour eux, et leur donnant de l'eau bénite avec un aspersoir, les avertissant de gagner l'indulgence plénière sur quelque médaille s'ils en ont, en prononçant de bouche et de cœur le saint nom de Jésus à l'article de la mort, et après leur décès. elles pourront quelquefois, dans la nécessité, aider à les ensevelir, si elles le peuvent commodément, et si la sœur servante le permet.

Art. 6.—Si les malades recouvrent leur santé, elles redoubleront leurs soins pour les exciter à profiter de leur maladie et de leur guérison, leur représentant que Dieu a ordonné leur maladie du corps pour la guérison de leur âme, et qu'il leur a rendu la santé corporelle afin qu'ils l'employent désormais à faire pénitence et à mener une bonne vie ; de quoi ils doivent faire de fortes résolutions et renouveller celles qu'ils ont faites au temps de leur maladie, leur conseillant quelque petite pratique selon leur portée ; comme de prier à genoux soir et matin, se confesser et communier plusieurs fois l'année, fuire les occasions du péché, et semblables ; mais elles leur doivent dire ces choses courtement et humblement.

Art. 7.—De peur que ces services spirituels ne préjudicient aux corporels qu'elles doivent rendre aux malades, comme il arriverait si, pour s'amuser trop à parler à quelqu'un d'eux, elles faisaient souffrir les autres, elles tâcheront de bien prendre en cela leurs mesures, réglant leurs temps et leurs exercices selon que le nombre ou le besoin des malades sera grand ou petit. Et parceque leurs emplois d'après-midi ne sont pas si pressants que ceux du matin, elles prendront ordinairement ce temps-là pour les instruire et les exhorter, en la façon marquée ci-dessus, particulièrement lorsqu'elles leur rendront les autres services nécessaires.

Art. 8.—Si l'instruction qu'elles donnent à un malade se

peut étendre aux autres qui sont dans la chambre où il est, elles tâcheront de le faire avec la discrétion requise, ce qui se peut aisément lorsqu'il y a des enfants, parceque les interrogeant sur les principaux mystères de notre sainte foi, ou leur recommandant leurs devoirs, les pères et mères qui seront là présents en pourront profiter, sans qu'ils se puissent apercevoir que c'est en partie pour eux qu'on parle.

Art. 9.—Elles se feront conscience de manquer au moindre service qu'elles doivent rendre aux malades, particulièrement pour ce qui est des remèdes qu'elles doivent leur donner, en la manière et à l'heure où le médecin a ordonné, si quelque grande nécessité n'oblige d'en user autrement : comme si leur maladie était trop empirée, ou s'ils étaient dans le frisson, ou en sueur, ou autre semblable empêchement.

Art. 10.—En servant les malades, elles ne doivent regarder que Dieu, et ne doivent non plus prendre garde aux louanges qu'ils leur donnent, qu'aux injures qu'ils leur disent, si ce n'est pour en faire un bon usage, en rejetant intérieurement les louanges, dans la vue de leur néant, et agréant les injures, pour honorer les mépris que le Fils de Dieu a reçus en la croix par ceux-là mêmes qu'il avait comblés de ses bienfaits.

Art. 11.—Quoiqu'elles ne doivent pas être trop faciles ni trop condescendantes quand ils refusent de prendre les remèdes ou se rendent trop insolents, néanmoins elles se garderont bien de les rudoyer ou mépriser ; au contraire elles les traiteront vec respect et humilité, se ressouvenant que la rudesse et le mépris qu'on fait d'eux, aussi bien que le service et l'honneur qu'on leur rend, s'adressent à Notre Seigneur lui-même.

Art. 12.—Elles ne recevront aucun présent, tant peu soit-il, des pauvres qu'elles assistent, et se donneront bien de garde de penser qu'ils leur soient obligés, pour le service qu'elles leur rendent ; mais, au contraire, elles doivent se persuader qu'elles leur sont fort redevables puisque par une petite aumône qu'elles leur font, non pas de leur bien propre, mais seulement d'un peu de leurs soins, elles se font des amis qui ont droit de leur donner, un jour, l'entrée dans le ciel ; et même dès cette vie elles reçoivent à leur sujet plus d'honneur et de vrai contentement qu'elles n'eussent jamais dû oser espérer dans le monde ;

de quoi elles ne doivent pas abuser, mais entrer en confusion dans la vue de leur indignité.

Art. 13.—Pour éviter les grands inconvénients qui pourraient arriver, elles n'entreprendront point de veiller les malades, ni les femmes qui sont en travail d'enfant, non plus que d'assister les femmes de mauvaise vie ; et si elles en sont requises, soit par les dames de la Charité, soit par les pauvres, soit par les voisins ou autres, elles s'en excuseront humblement, disant que cela leur est défendu par leurs règles ; et quoique certain cas de nécessité extraordinaire semble les obliger à servir quelqu'une de ces trois sortes de personnes, elles ne l'entreprendront pas néanmoins sans une permission générale ou particulière de leurs supérieurs, et sans un ordre exprès de la Supérieure de la Charité ; et avec tout cela elles ne leur rendront service, autant qu'elles pourront, que par l'entremise de quelque autre personne, et n'en donneront connaissance qu'à leurs supérieurs.

Art. 14.—S'il se trouvait des malades si abandonnés qu'il n'y eût personne pour faire leur lit ou pour leur rendre quelque autre service encore plus abject, elles le pourront faire selon le loisir qu'elles en auront, si la sœur servante le trouve à-propos ; elles tâcheront néanmoins de procurer, s'il se peut, que quelque autre personne leur continue la même charité, de peur que cela ne retarde l'assistance des autres pauvres.

Art. 15.—Quand quelque sœur sera malade et alitée, elle en donnera avis à la Supérieure dès le lendemain, ou au plus tard le troisième jour de sa maladie, afin qu'elle l'envoie visiter et puisse faire ce qui sera nécessaire pour son soulagement. Celles qui demeurent en des lieux éloignés de la Supérieure, le lui feront savoir par la première commodité.

Art. 16.—Elles seront soigneuses de bien conserver et ménager l'argent qu'elles ont en maniement ; à cet effet, la sœur servante gardera séparément sous la clef celui qui est pour les pauvres et celui qui est pour les sœurs, et elles prendront bien garde de ne point employer pour leur usage aucune des choses destinées pour les pauvres, soit vivres, soit linge ou argent, se représentant qu'elles commettraient en cela un larcin dont elles seraient coupables et responsables devant Dieu. Il

leur est seulement permis de se servir en tout temps des ustensiles et du gros linge, comme draps, nappes, serviettes, etc., etc. ; et durant leur maladie, on leur donne la portion ordinaire des malades et tous les remèdes nécessaires, même ceux dont elles peuvent avoir besoin par précaution, après l'avoir proposé à quelqu'une des dames officières de la Charité, si elles leur en faisaient l'offre.

ART. 17.—Quant à l'argent qu'on leur donne pour l'entretien de leur personne, la sœur servante en pourra laisser quelque peu entre les mains d'une sœur compagne, qui aura soin de leur petite dépense ; celle-ci toutefois n'achètera rien sans le consentement de la sœur servante, si ce n'est dans une nécessité pressante, et des choses ordinaires ; mais aucune ne disposera de l'argent qui pourra rester, après leur nourriture prise, qu'avec la permission et selon l'intention de leur Supérieure.

ART. 18.—Elles feront une attention toute particulière aux autres articles de leurs règles communes qui les regardent, particulièrement et spécialement aux suivantes :

(1) Préférer le service des pauvres malades à tout autre exercice, soit corporel, soit spirituel, et ne se faire point scrupule d'avancer ou différer tout pour cela, pourvu que ce soit la nécessité pressante des malades, et non pas la paresse ou la dissipation extérieure qui les porte à en user de la sorte ; et qu'elles soient exactes à se coucher toujours à neuf heures et se lever à quatre.

(2) Porter un grand respect aux dames de la Charité, aux médecins, et surtout à messieurs les confesseurs des pauvres et autres ecclésiastiques.

EXTRACTS FROM THE CONFERENCES.

Ce que Moïse dit au peuple de Dieu, je vous le dis aussi, mes filles : voilà vos règles qui vous sont envoyées de la part de Dieu ; si vous y êtes fidèles, toutes les bénédictions du ciel se répandront sur vous ; vous aurez bénédictions dans le travail, bénédictions en sortant, en entrant, bénédictions en ce que vous ferez, en ce que vous ne ferez pas, et tout sera rempli de bénédictions pour vous.

Que si, ce qu'à Dieu ne plaise, il y en avait quelqu'une qui ne fût point dans cette disposition d'observer les règles, je lui dis ce que Moïse dit à ceux qui n'accompliraient pas la loi qu'il leur enseignait de la part de Dieu : Vous aurez malédictions dans la maison et dehors, malédictions en ce que vous ferez et en ce que vous ne ferez pas ; en un mot, tout sera rempli de malédictions pour vous.—P. 104.

Mes sœurs, vous n'êtes pas des religieuses, et cependant vous êtes obligées plus qu'elles à travailler à votre perfection. Je le répète, non, vous n'êtes pas des religieuses, et s'il se trouvait parmi vous quelque esprit brouillon qui dît, "Il faudrait être religieuse, cela est bien plus beau," ah ! mes sœurs, la compagnie serait à l'extrême onction. Craignez, mes filles, et tant que vous vivrez ne permettez jamais ce changement ; pleurez, gémissez, et représentez-le aux supérieurs ; n'y consentez en aucune sorte, car qui dit religieuse dit un cloître, et les filles de la Charité doivent aller partout.—P. 117.

Il est dit que l'attache est une affection aux créatures que l'on n'aime pas pour Dieu, mais pour quelqu'autre chose. Or nous ne devons jamais avoir de l'amour pour autre chose que pour Dieu, ou si nous en avons, ce doit être pour l'amour de Dieu. . . . Si donc une sœur de la Charité aime sa compagne, ce ne doit être qu'à cause de sa vertu, et des grâces de Dieu qui sont en elle. Tout de même, si un père aime ses enfants, il faut qu'il le fasse pour l'amour de Dieu, qui les lui a donnés, et qui veut qu'il les aime. Mais dire, J'aime celle-ci parcequ'elle est de mon pays ; j'aime celle-là parcequ'elle suit mes inclinations, oh ! mauvaise attache ! attache dangereuse, dont il vous faut garder ou défendre, afin de n'aimer jamais aucune chose que Dieu ou pour l'amour de Dieu.

[De telles observations confondent notre faiblesse ; nos qualités, si nous en avons, ne sont que des défauts ! Quelle idée élevée ne devons nous pas avoir pour le caractère sublime des filles de la Charité, dont les *attaches déréglées* ne sont que nos sentiments habituels, des meilleurs, des plus légitimes ! —*Note by M. de Pistoye.*]—P. 133.

Puisque la maxime de Jésus-Christ était de choisir le pire pour soi, et de se mépriser soi-même, vous ne sauriez,

mes filles, trop demander à Dieu qu'il vous donne ces grands sentiments de mépris de vous-mêmes, afin qu'à son exemple vous vous glorifiiez d'être tenues pour pauvres, pour misérables, pour pécheresses, en sorte que vous aimiez tout ce qu'il y a de pire, et généralement tout ce qui peut vous porter à ce mépris de vous-mêmes, et que s'il vous était permis de choisir, vous prissiez toujours de préférence la plus méchante robe, le plus méchant collet, la chemise la plus grossière, bref, que vous courussiez à tout ce qu'il y a de plus vil . . . puisque c'est la maxime de Notre Seigneur, qui a toujours méprisé les choses de la terre.

C'est vraiment pour vous, mes filles, un grand sujet de remercier Dieu, voyant que vous êtes désirées et demandées en tant de lieux qu'à peine y pouvez-vous fournir. Eh Sauveur ! que sommes-nous pour que vous daigniez vous servir de nous, pauvres filles qui ne sommes que comme la balayure du monde ? Cela n'est-il pas vrai, mes filles ? Car y a-t-il parmi vous des filles de bonne condition, et n'êtes-vous pas presque toutes filles de laboureurs et d'artisans ? Oh ! s'il y a quelque noblesse, cela est rare, et s'il y en a quelques-unes de la ville, elles appartiennent aussi à de pauvres gens.—P. 148.

Vouloir des confesseurs à sa mode, ou que l'une voulut aller à celui-ci et l'autre à celui-là, ô Sauveur ! prenez-y garde, mes filles ; car si cela arrivait, c'est une marque qu'il y a de la discorde entre vous, et qu'encore ce serait un scandale de voir des filles de la Charité aller à deux confesseurs. . . . Quoi donc, mes sœurs ! s'appuyer sur tel confesseur, et mettre sa confiance aux hommes, n'est ce pas se retirer de la conduite de la Providence, ou vouloir se faire un Dieu à sa mode ? . . . Ainsi qu'il ne vous arrive jamais que vous changiez le confesseur qui vous a été donné, sans en avoir reçu l'ordre de vos supérieurs. C'est ce que vos règles vous prescrivent. . . . Selon cela, je défends de la part de Dieu, à toutes les filles de la Charité, tant celles qui sont ici que celles qui sont absentes, de quitter les confesseurs qu'on leur aura donnés pour en choisir d'autres.—P. 151.

Vous ne devez donc rien avoir en propre, ni à la maison

ni dehors ; autrement, la fille qui veut avoir quelque chose en propre est une Saphire, et tôt ou tard il lui arrivera malheur. On vous en a averties quand vous êtes entrées dans la compagnie ; vous avez promis de le faire, et vous n'y êtes reçues qu'après y avoir expressément consenti. Il n'y a donc pas d'excuse ni de prétexte qui puisse vous en dispenser. . . . Je ne puis m'empêcher d'admirer la conduite de la divine Providence, qui vous a donné la pensée de contribuer à l'entretien de la maison. Cela est vraiment admirable, et c'est faire comme des enfants le doivent, c'est-à-dire de nourrir sa mère ; car la compagnie est votre mère, et vous contribuez avec elle à nourrir vos petites sœurs qui y sont et qui y viendront après vous.—P. 155.

Vos règles tendent toutes à vous faire saintes. . . . Je le dis de l'autorité du pape Clément VIII., lequel disait : "Donnez-moi une personne qui ait certainement et constamment gardé les règles de sa religion ou de la communauté où elle a été, je la déclare sainte sans aucun miracle, pourvu qu'on m'en donne des preuves suffisantes." Ainsi, mes filles, vous voyez qu'il ne faut pas aller à Jérusalem ni prendre tant d'austérité sur soi, comme font plusieurs, pour acquérir la sainteté, mais qu'il suffit de bien garder ses règles. Une fille qui est fidèle à l'observance de ses règles fait plus que si elle faisait les plus grandes œuvres du monde. Donnez-moi la plus grande ouvrière qui soit dans la Charité, qui serve aux pauvres forçats, aux insensés, qui fasse merveille partout où elle va, si elle n'observe ses règles en tout point, tout cela n'est rien au prix d'une autre qui est exacte.—P. 163.

Cette charité entre vous, est une des choses que je vous recommande particulièrement, puisque vous êtes filles d'un même Père. Au moment donc que vous vous sentirez quelque petite aliénation dans votre esprit, ou que vous verrez que quelqu'une de vos sœurs témoigne se retirer de l'amitié qui doit être entre vous, prévenez-la de suite, et dites lui avec ouverture de cœur : "Ma sœur, si vous saviez comme je vous aime et toute l'amitié que j'ai pour vous ! Oh croyez que c'est de tout mon cœur et comme Dieu me le commande ; aimez-moi de même, je vous prie." Que si la sœur

n'entend pas ce langage la première fois, témoignez-lui la même amitié une autre fois encore, et Dieu permettra qu'elle change. Eh! mais, monsieur, je ne sens pas cela dans mon cœur, et j'ai de la peine à le dire!—N'importe, dites-le toujours, car c'est une inclination maligne qui vous donne cette peine, et dont le diable se sert pour vous empêcher de vous aimer les unes les autres. Désavouez ce que le malin esprit vous suggère, et croyez qu'il vous quittera.—P. 231.

Les Chrétiens ont deux sortes d'amour: l'un humain, l'autre chrétien. Le premier, qui est commun à tous les hommes, fait qu'on aime par inclination naturelle, d'après les sens, comme quand on aime son pays, ses parents, certaines personnes seulement, etc.; l'autre, qui est l'amour chrétien, fait qu'on aime par raison, c'est-à-dire pour l'amour de Dieu, tout le monde également. Or les personnes de communauté ont ces deux sortes d'amour, dont l'un est le mauvais, et, comme dit le bienheureux évêque de Genève (St. François de Sales), celui de la bête; c'est celui qui ne s'étend qu'à un petit nombre de personnes; l'autre est le bon, c'est celui qui s'étend à toutes, pour l'amour de Notre Seigneur, dont nous sommes tous les membres. . . . Une fille, par exemple, qui a de l'inclination pour une autre, lui dira tout ce qu'elle veut et ne veut pas; elle lui fera connaître tout ce qu'elle a dans le cœur, ou, pour ainsi dire, elle le lui donne tout entier et n'en réserve rien pour ses pauvres sœurs, qui ne lui sont rien au prix de celle-là. D'où il suit qu'elle n'a ni l'amour de Dieu ni l'amour du prochain. Mais pourquoi? parcequ'elle n'a pour sa sœur qu'un amour de bête, et qu'elle préfère cet amour de la créature à l'amour du Créateur, qu'elle devrait aimer par-dessus toutes choses, et puis le prochain pour l'amour de Dieu. . . . Quoi! une sœur qui a un cœur pour toutes ses sœurs, l'ôte à toutes pour le donner à une sœur qu'elle aime, mais en la manière que les bêtes aiment! C'est comme si elle disait: J'ai un cœur, tenez, je vous le donne, et il n'y aura personne que vous qui y ait place. Ah! Jésus, quelle injustice! [Pour nous, gens du monde, quand les règles de la morale subsistent, et qu'une charité générale reste disponible pour le prochain, cet amour de bête que repousse St. Vincent de Paule, c'est l'amour

modèle! Oh! que nous sommes loin de la perfection!—*Note by M. de Pistoye.*]—P. 245.

Sachez donc aujourd'hui, mes filles, que si vous vous étudiez vous-mêmes, vous trouverez que vous êtes pires que toutes les autres, et que vous avez plus d'imperfections qu'aucune de vos sœurs; et vous verrez aussi que si vous ne tombez pas dans les mêmes fautes que d'autres, à coup sûr vous tomberiez si Dieu ne vous retenait par sa grâce; et, partout, par l'expérience que vous aurez de votre propre faiblesse et de votre peu de fermeté, vous verrez que non-seulement vous êtes pires que toutes les autres sœurs, mais encore pires que toutes les filles du monde. Vous verrez encore plus, que vous êtes pires que le diable, puisque si ce malin esprit avait reçu les grâces qui nous sont données, il serait meilleur que nous. Oui, si Jésus-Christ était mort pour les démons, comme il est mort pour nous, s'ils avaient reçu les lumières et les bons mouvements que Dieu nous donne, ils le serviraient mieux que nous. C'est ce que disait un jour un possédé à quelqu'un: "Ah! malheureux que vous êtes," disait-il, "de vivre de la sorte! Quoi! vous avez un Dieu qui est mort pour vous, et néanmoins vous vivez autrement qu'il ne veut! Oh! s'il nous avait fait la même grâce de mourir pour nous, nous le servirions mieux que vous!"

Dès qu'il en est ainsi, mes filles, il faut avouer que nous sommes pires que le démon; pour moi, je n'ai pas de peine à me le persuader, et je vois, clair comme le jour, que je suis pire que le diable, car si le diable avait reçu les grâces que Dieu m'a données, je ne dis pas les grâces extraordinaires, mais seulement les grâces communes, il n'y a pas de démon en enfer qui ne fût meilleur que je ne suis. Ressouvenez-vous donc, mes filles, d'estimer toutes vos sœurs plus parfaites que vous; croyez qu'elles sont bonnes, et que vous êtes la pire de toutes. Si vous vous établissez bien là-dedans, vous ferez de votre compagnie un paradis."—P. 254.

Vous avez choisi Jésus-Christ pour votre époux, c'est sur lui que vous devez jeter les yeux pour lui devenir semblables; et comme il a pratiqué toutes sortes de vertus, vous devez avoir soin de les cultiver toutes, d'autant que c'est ce que

Dieu demande de vous. Or, il était conforme à la volonté de son Père, et il désire, mes filles, que vous conformiez en tout la vôtre à la sienne ; non-seulement aux choses divines, mais même aux choses temporelles. Il demande de vous que ses vertus soient vos vertus . . . . de sorte que qui dit *fille de Charité* dit une personne de qui toutes les paroles, actions et pensées doivent être comme celles de Notre Seigneur. . . . Ainsi il faut vous donner à Dieu pour faire ce qu'il demande de vous dans les lieux où vous serez envoyées ; qui à cinquante lieues, qui à cent, qui plus loin encore, et cela pour l'amour de votre époux qui . . . vous a inspiré de quitter le monde, vos parents et vos amis, aussi bien que toutes les prétentions que vous pouviez y avoir ; car c'est assurément pour son amour que vous avez fait tout cela ; c'est là le motif qui vous a fait venir. . . . Personne ne peut penser qu'aucune de vous soit venue pour tout autre motif, comme légèreté ou curiosité, ce que jamais nous n'oserons croire.—P. 319.

Donnez-moi une fille d'entre vous qui pratique l'humilité, qui ne s'estime rien, qui aime que ses supérieurs ou autres la rebutent, qui pense qu'elle ne réussit à rien, qu'elle gâte tout, et enfin qui pense qu'elle fait fort imparfaitement toutes choses, et je dirai qu'elle est une vraie fille de Charité.—P. 322.

Notre Seigneur lui-même n'a pas eu soin des malades seulement pour le corps, mais pour leurs âmes. Vous lui succédez, et partout vous devez l'imiter, ainsi que les apôtres ; et quand vous allez voir vos malades, pensez que c'est moins pour leurs corps que vous donnez des soins que pour leurs âmes.—P. 333.

C'est ainsi que vous devez être exactes à faire tout ce que messieurs les médecins ordonnent, parceque s'il arrivait quelque accident à un malade vous en seriez responsables. . . . Vous devez donc, mes sœurs, leur obéir en tout ce qui regarde le service des malades, et estimer que vous faites la volonté de Dieu en faisant la leur. C'est ce que Dieu demande de vous, et c'est le seul moyen de conserver la compagnie. . . . Si vous désobéissiez aux médecins, ne voulant pas suivre leurs ordres, ils vous décrieraient partout. Si vous désobéissiez aux dames, elles feraient tout de même, et les uns et les autres diraient, à coup sûr : "Ces filles-là ne sont bonnes à rien, elles ne veulent

faire que ce qui leur plaît; il vaudra donc mieux prendre les filles de la paroisse, du moins elles feront ce que nous voudrons."—P. 336.

C'est là la promesse qu'a faite Notre Seigneur de donner à ceux qui le suivront cent fois autant en cette vie, et enfin la vie éternelle. N'est-il pas vrai, mes filles, que toutes tant que vous êtes, vous avez votre vie assurée? Dieu a mis un fonds pour pourvoir à vos nécessités et vous retirer des soins d'un ménage. Ordinairement les gens mariés ont mille soucis. Ils calculent comment ils passeront l'année, et comment ils pourront subvenir à leurs nécessités; mais les filles de la Charité sont à l'abri de tous ces soins. . . . Vous n'êtes pas en peine comme les gens du monde, ni comme eux, vous ne pensez pas comment vous passerez toute l'année, puisque Dieu a pourvu à tous vos besoins.

Voilà, mes filles, comme vous avez cette récompense cent fois au double, même dès cette vie; voyez donc le plaisir qu'il y a à servir Dieu en servant les pauvres!

Je m'assure, pouvez-vous dire, que toute ma vie je serai vêtue et nourrie sans aucune inquiétude à cet égard.

Quant au plaisir de servir Dieu en servant les pauvres, il est plus grand que celui que toutes les personnes mariées peuvent avoir. . . . Une femme crie et se fâche contre son mari fâcheux ou débauché; les uns et les autres sont pleins de soucis et de mécontentement. Le plaisir qu'ils peuvent prendre n'est donc pas comparable au plaisir et moins encore à la consolation que goute une fille de la Charité au service des pauvres.—P. 338.

CHAPTER V.

DEACONESSES OF MODERN GERMANY.

THE growth of the Deaconess system in modern Germany is so recent that we have the fullest information respecting it from the earliest of its founders, the Rev. Theodore Fliedner, of Kaiserswerth on the Rhine, who has left a short history of the origin and growth of the oldest of all the Deaconess institutions; namely, the one established by him in that place.[1] I take the following account of the system, especially the Kaiserswerth institution, from a pamphlet upon ancient and modern Deaconesses, written by Pastor Fliedner, and republished, with additions, since his death by his successor, Pastor Disselhof;[2] and from the "Armen- und Krankenfreund," a monthly magazine published at Kaiserswerth for the purpose of circulating information respecting the Deaconess system in all parts of the world.

In Pastor Fliedner's account of the origin of the Deaconess institution at Kaiserswerth, he tells us that the oldest of the cluster of special institutions of which it is composed, namely the asylum for discharged female prisoners, was opened on the 17th September, 1833; but that, in order to trace the manner in which the way was prepared for this institution, it is necessary to go back ten years. In January 1822, at the age of

[1] Kurze Geschichte der Entstehung der Ersten Evangelischen Liebes-Anstalten zu Kaiserswerth. Von Theodor Fliedner. Reprinted from the "Armen- und Krankenfreund" of 1856.

[2] Nachricht über das Diakonissen-Werk in der Christlichen Welt alter und neuer Zeit, und über die Diakonissen Anstalt zu Kaiserswerth. Von Theodor Fliedner. Fünfte, nach dem Tode des Verfassers herausgegebene Auflage. Von Julius Disselhof. Kaiserswerth, 1867.

twenty-two, Theodore Fliedner was appointed pastor to the Protestant congregation at Kaiserswerth, which consisted of not quite two hundred persons, most of whom were workers in a velvet manufactory which had been established there in 1778, and which failed only a month after Pastor Fliedner's arrival. This failure threatened to cause the dispersion of the Protestant congregation, and made it impossible for them to meet the expenses of the church and schools. Another parish was offered to the Pastor, who, however, thinking it wrong to desert his flock in this time of need, made a collection for them in the neighbouring parishes, with results which met the immediate necessity, and encouraged him, in 1823, to undertake a journey to Holland and England for the purpose of collecting funds for a permanent endowment. In these two countries he saw and admired many charitable and religious institutions, especially the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Prison Visiting Society, and became acquainted with the promoters of these various works. He did not, at this time, see Mrs. Fry, but he made acquaintance with several of her friends, and visited Newgate. "I remarked also," he says, "how a living faith in Christ had called almost all these institutions and societies into existence, and still maintained them. The perception of the fruitfulness and charitable energy of this faith powerfully strengthened my own still very weak faith. . . . . I returned home in August 1824, with wonder and thankfulness that it had been vouchsafed to me to see all these great marvels of love of the evangelical faith, but also with deep shame that we *men in Germany* had thus allowed ourselves to be outdone in Christian benevolence by *women*, and particularly that hitherto we had done so little in the prisons." In the autumn of 1825, Pastor Fliedner obtained leave to preach once a fortnight, on Sunday afternoons, to the Protestant prisoners in the gaol in Düsseldorf, and to undertake the pastoral charge of them. The neglected state in which he found the inmates led him, after visiting most of the principal prisons in the Rhenish provinces, to establish a prison-visiting society upon the model of the English one, of which he became the secretary.

In 1827 he made a journey into Holland, Brabant, and

Friesland, to investigate the system pursued in those countries with regard to the poor, the prisoners, the church, and the schools, which he has described in a book called "Kollektenreise nach Holland," published in 1831, in which the need for Deaconesses in the Protestant churches is pointed out. In 1832 he made a similar journey to England and Scotland, when he became acquainted with Mrs. Fry and Dr. Chalmers, and again returned home much refreshed and strengthened in mind.

The Prison Society at Düsseldorf had long felt the importance of providing some kind of asylum for the more hopeful female prisoners on their discharge, where they could remain for a time under feminine superintendence, and receive religious instruction and (if necessary) industrial training, till they could be provided with suitable situations. It was agreed among the members of the Society, who, like the prisoners, were partly Catholic and partly Protestant, that there must be a separate asylum for the members of each religion, since religious instruction was one of the principal objects in view. But there was no such asylum in Germany, and the scheme was thought impracticable by many people. Then Pastor Fliedner offered to try the experiment at Kaiserswerth, though not considering it a suitable place, because of the smallness of his congregation. His wife had for several years gratuitously superintended an asylum for unprotected children in Düsselthal before her marriage, and was wishing to devote herself to the care of the prisoners in the gaol at Düsseldorf, when that event took place in 1828. When the Pastor undertook to found an asylum for female prisoners, he and his wife sent for one of her friends, Catharina Göbel, to consult with them "whether she could not, in the name of the Lord, undertake the asylum." She came at once, leaving a pleasant circle of like-minded friends and relations, and almost immediately fell ill with ague. "The friends in Braunfels, who would gladly have kept her there, that she might have employed her abilities and her fortune there for the kingdom of God, decidedly declared that this illness was a voice from God that she should not stay at Kaiserswerth, but return home at once;

otherwise she would be tempting God. She was much too weak for an asylum, &c. &c. These letters and the long duration of the fever very much disturbed her mind. We tried to quiet and comfort her. In the midst of this struggle of body and mind, on the 17th September, 1833, came Minna, the first inmate of the asylum, from the House of Correction at Werden. We lodged her, for want of any other place, in my summer-house. Occupation about her, and the care and education given her, helped to quiet our disturbed asylum superintendent more than any quinine or mixtures. Afterwards, as more inmates came, her spiritual motherly love found full satisfaction, and her heart grew firm."

The asylum was thus established, and after a few weeks transferred from the Pastor's garden to a hired house in Kaiserswerth. Pastor Fliedner and his wife had almost entirely to provide the money for it, and the spiritual care of the inmates was a much more arduous undertaking. Out of the ten received in the first year, five however gave great encouragement by their repentance and good behaviour after leaving. Another helper also joined them, who for two years and a half acted as assistant to the superintendent, and afterwards became the wife of a missionary in Borneo.

In 1835 the Pastor established in the same summer-house a knitting-school for poor children, under the management of Henrietta Frickenhaus, a member of his congregation, who showed so much zeal, love, and wisdom in the management of the children, that in 1836 the knitting-school was developed into an infant-school for children of all denominations.

The next branch of charitable work to which the Pastor turned was that of nursing. "The sick poor had long lain on our hearts. How often had I seen them deserted; physically, badly cared for; spiritually, quite forgotten, fading away in their often unwholesome rooms, like leaves in autumn! Then how many towns, even with large populations, were without hospitals! and where there were hospitals,—I had seen many on my journeys in Holland, Brabant, England, Scotland, as well as in our own Germany,—there indeed I sometimes found the halls and corridors splendid with marble (there was such a

one in Manchester), but the bodily care was bad. The doctors complained bitterly of hirelings by day, hirelings by night, of the drunkenness and other immoralities of the male and female attendants. . . . And what shall I say of the spiritual care of the sick?—that was little thought of. Hospital preachers were no longer known in many hospitals, much less hospital chaplains. Whereas, in the pious time of old, the Protestant hospitals and similar institutions in the Netherlands bore, and still bear, the beautiful name of God's houses (*Godshuizen*), because it was acknowledged that there God was specially visiting the inmates in order to draw them to Himself, and chaplains and clergymen were regularly connected with them, as also in Germany and other Protestant countries, this spiritual care had now almost entirely ceased in many parts of the Protestant church. The formal spiritual care, which had remained in a greater degree in Catholic hospitals, was still not such as to satisfy careful observers.

"Did not such evils cry aloud to Heaven? Did not the Lord's word of thunder apply also to us, 'I was sick, and ye visited me not'?

"And should our Protestant Christian women not be able and willing to undertake the Christian care of the sick? Had not many of these Christian women, in the war of liberation of 1813-15, performed wonders of love and self-sacrifice in the case of the sick in the military hospitals of their towns? Some had even travelled to the hospitals of distant cities and had helped there!

"And did not an Elizabeth Fry even now shine before us as a splendid example of Protestant faith, and courage, and self-sacrificing faithful love, who would not be driven back by the pestilential air of the gaols, or of the sick-rooms of the prisoners, from visiting them, nursing them, and caring for their souls? Had she not even already inspired troops of like-minded exalted Protestant Christian women to follow her example in visiting prisoners?

"And the example of our own faithful labourers in the asylum and the infant-school, was this to be lost upon us? Ought not we, of all people, to place more confidence in the powers of

the female sex? Had not the apostolical church already used these powers for the care of the suffering members of the community, and officially recognized them in the Deaconesses; and had not the Primitive Christian church, following her example, for many centuries appointed these Deaconesses as servants of the church; and should we longer delay to renew the employment of these womanly powers—to renew the appointment of these blessed handmaidens of the Lord to His service?

"These and similar considerations left me no peace. And my faithful wife was of the same mind and of yet greater courage.

"But could our little Kaiserswerth be the right place for a Protestant deaconess-house, for the training of Protestant nurses for the sick—a place with a population of scarcely 1800 souls, of which the great majority were Catholics, where we could not even expect patients enough for a training institution for nurses, and so poor a place that here we could not find money even partially to defray the great yearly expense of its maintenance? And were not older men, more experienced in the care of souls, fitter than I for this difficult undertaking? I went to my clerical brethren in Düsseldorf, Duisberg, Mettmann, Elberfeld, Barmen, and asked them if they would not organize such an institution in the midst of their great congregations, for which indeed it was also a pressing necessity. The Ober-Präsident von Vincke proposed Elberfeld as especially fitting. This town was chiefly Protestant, rich in money, rich in benevolence, rich in patients, rich in Christian women for nurses. But all my brethren declined my proposal. They were too much overwhelmed with business. I was boldly to undertake the affair. I had time for it, with my small congregation. The quietness of our retired Kaiserswerth was particularly favourable for such a training institution. God had not allowed so many useful journeys of investigation into such objects to fall to my share without an object. He could also send the necessary money to Kaiserswerth, and patients and nurses also. They would willingly give a helping hand according to their abilities.

"Thus we perceived that it was the Lord's will to lay this burden upon our shoulders. We took it willingly upon us.

"We looked out quietly for a house for the hospital. Then suddenly the largest and best house in Kaiserswerth, the family house of one of the principal founders of the Protestant congregation, was offered for sale. My wife had been confined only three days before; but, nevertheless, she laid it upon me to buy the house in the name of the Lord, and the sooner the better. It was indeed to cost 2,300 thalers" (about 323*l.*), "and we had no money.

"I bought it cheerfully, on the 20th April, 1836. The money was to be paid at Martinmas in the same year." The money was lent or given before that time came, through the kindness of various friends who were interested in the undertaking. Among these was Count Stolberg, the *Regierungs Präsident*. "In his house at Düsseldorf, on the 30th of May, 1836, the statutes of a Rhenish Westphalian Deaconesses Association, composed by me, were revised and signed by Count Stolberg, whom we chose as President," . . . here follow other names; "and by the two presidents of the Rhenish and the Westphalian provincial synods. . . . The association desired from the first to bind itself as closely as possible to the church. Therefore the presidents (*Vorsteher*) of the synods, as such, were always to be members of the purely Protestant government of the association."

Various difficulties were encountered in the collection of the necessary funds, and in the prejudices and jealousies of the inhabitants of Kaiserswerth, &c., especially among the tenants of the house, whose lease had not expired, and who objected to any part of it being used as a hospital. Eventually these lodgers were bought out. Meanwhile they attempted to stir up the Catholic priests against the undertaking. "But we were not thinking of any proselytising, and, as the best proof of this, we had chosen the Catholic doctor of the town as the hospital doctor, although there were Protestant doctors in the town, because he had been recommended to us by the authorities as the cleverest."

All these difficulties were gradually overcome. "But a still greater strengthening of our faith was soon granted to us. The most difficult point was to find Christian women fitted for the

office of Deaconess. We had long sought in vain. At last an elderly, tried Christian maiden, Gertrude R., the daughter of a former doctor at Rührort, a sister of one now living there, was persuaded to come and visit us, and consult with us about entering upon the Deaconess's calling. She had for many years helped her father and brother in nursing the sick and dressing their wounds, and had also great experience and practice in the spiritual care of the sick and the poor, so that the Lord had prepared her as an excellent instrument for the deaconess' work." After some hesitation, she agreed to the proposal, and promised to come on the 20th October. "But we could not wait so long. The ground burned under our feet till the hospital was opened. Then the Lord put it into the heart of a Christian maiden from Düsseldorf, Albertine P., to offer to help us in the housekeeping for a few months on the first opening of the house, although she did not wish to become a Deaconess. Our children's maid, Catherine B., from Düsseldorf, who wished to become an infant-school teacher, offered to stay for a time in the Deaconess house and help to take care of the sick. Thus the Deaconess house began without Deaconesses.

"On the 13th October the two maidens went into the house, and arranged the lowest floor for themselves and a few sick, very scantily. A table, a few chairs with half-broken backs, damaged knives, some forks with only two prongs, old-fashioned, worm-eaten bedsteads of different shapes and colours, and similar furniture and utensils, which had been given us,—in such a servant-like condition we began, but with great gladness and thanksgiving. For we knew, we felt, that the Lord had here prepared Himself a place. But, now, would any sick come?" There was still a good deal of prejudice and opposition; but on the 16th October the first patient, a Catholic maid-servant, presented herself, her Catholic employers themselves answering for her. Then began troubles with the remaining lodgers, who had to be persuaded to go away with compensation; and then "we had, to our great joy, the whole large, fine house to ourselves . . . It was not long before more patients came, even from Barmen, sent to us by the clergy, and also from our own town, in spite of all opposition. Our first Deaconess, Sister

Gertrude, had arrived only on the 20th October; some aspirants to the office of Deaconess soon followed, so that we lacked neither patients nor nurses.

"Meanwhile there was no want of mocking and contempt from the haughty Catholics, especially in Düsseldorf. They declared that because our sisters took no vows of celibacy, and had not the other rules of nuns, the thing would come to nothing. The Burgomaster at first would not even write down the names of the probationers who entered, because he thought the undertaking so contemptible that he expected it would soon disappear of itself. So entirely despised were we, and a jest to the proud. But it was the Lord's pleasure here also to choose what is foolish in the world's sight, and despised, and nothing, in order that no flesh may boast before Him, but all honour be to Him alone.

"Thus the mustard-seed of the Deaconess work was sown, quietly and small, but in faith, and in imitation of the apostolic church. Therefore it is of great promise. And behold, already the Lord has begun to fulfil His promise, and to bless the plants to His glory, so that they stretch out their fruitful branches into many lands, even into the four quarters of the world. May it grow up to a tree of life, whose leaves serve for the healing of the sick and miserable among Christians and heathens, Jews and Turks, so that the body of Christ may through this also be built up to an holy temple, for a habitation of God in the spirit!"

The history which is thus brought down to the establishment of the Deaconess institution at Kaiserswerth, in 1836, is continued to 1867 in the pamphlet to which I have referred as the joint work of Pastor Fliedner and his son-in-law and successor, Pastor Disselhof, the present "inspector" of the institution. I proceed to abridge and extract from this pamphlet an account of the subsequent growth of the system.

"Such institutions," says the writer, "were afterwards established in the Protestant churches of many other countries, mostly in association with our mother-house at Kaiserswerth. In the year 1841 the Deaconess house at Paris was opened; in 1842, those at Strasburg and at Echallens, in French Switzerland (this latter is now at St. Loup); in 1844, at Dresden and

Utrecht; in 1847, at Bethanie, in Berlin; in 1849, at Pittsburg, North America; in 1850, at Bethanie, in Breslau, and at Königsburg, in Prussia; in 1851, at Stettin, Ludwigslust, Stockholm, and Carlsruhe; in 1852, at Riehen, near Basle; in 1854, at Neuendettelsau and Stuttgart; in 1856, at Augsburg; in 1857, at Halle; in 1858, at Darmstadt and Zurich; in 1859, at Hamburg, Berne, and Hanover; in 1861, in London; in 1862, at Copenhagen and Dantzig; in 1864, at Treysa, in Kurhessen; and in 1866, at Posen, Frankfort-on-the-Maine, and Frankenstein. To these must be added the Elizabeth Hospital, established by Gossner, in Berlin, which with a good right desires to be reckoned among the Deaconess mother-houses.

"In the year of Fliedner's death, the Protestant church counted 30 mother-houses, with 1,590 deaconesses; now there are 34, with more than 1,700 sisters." From the "Armen- und Krankenfreund" for October 1868, which contains a report of the triennial conference held in September 1868, at Kaiserswerth, it appears that the number of mother-houses was then stated as 42, and of deaconesses at 2,106; the number of establishments of various kinds belonging to them (including "mother-houses") is stated at 566.

There are, I believe, great differences among these independent Deaconess institutions, as regards their internal organization, as well as in the nature of their relations with the various ecclesiastical bodies to which their members belong. I believe, however, that they are all more or less connected with some Protestant church. Their number and variety having made it impossible for me to attempt to collect detailed information respecting them all, I have chosen the institution at Kaiserswerth as the most obvious, and probably the most adequate, representative of the system. It has some claim to a sort of precedence as being the oldest of all the Deaconess institutions, as well as the one to which more than a fourth part of the total number of Deaconesses belong; and this claim appears to be in some sense recognized by the other Deaconess institutions, by the fact that the conferences, to which all or nearly all of them send representatives, are still held there. It is, however, often forgotten in England that

it is but one among more than forty mother-houses of a somewhat similar character.

The number of sisters belonging to the institution at Kaiserswerth was in 1867 above 500, 320 being Deaconesses and the rest probationers. About 90 of these 500 were then employed as teaching-sisters, the rest as nursing-sisters, or "Pflegeschwestern," under which name are included those employed in visiting the poor, superintending refuges, &c., as well as those engaged in nursing the sick. In the "Armen- und Krankenfreund" for December 1868, the number of sisters is stated at 520; that of out-stations at 145.

The group of institutions belonging to the Deaconess establishment at Kaiserswerth is at present composed as follows:—

1. The Mother-house itself, where the sisters live, and where the probationers go through the various "stations," or departments, under the direction of experienced Deaconesses.

2. The Hospital, containing 150 beds, including wards for men, women, and children, and for patients who pay for private rooms, and separate rooms for cases requiring isolation.

3. The Asylum for the Insane. The patients received are Protestant women of the educated classes, not incurable; they make payments varying according to the accommodation required. There are about thirty patients; their medical care is undertaken by a physician engaged by the institution for that purpose; their spiritual treatment and general superintendence belongs to the Inspector of the Deaconess institution.

4. The Deaconess School, where girls are received after confirmation, who wish to become Deaconesses, but have not yet attained the required age of eighteen. Here they receive elementary and religious instruction, and are taught household work, gardening, and farming. The average number of pupils is about fifteen.

5. The Infant School.

6. The Orphan Asylum for Girls, the children of clergymen, teachers, and others of the educated middle classes, both of whose parents are dead: some of these are received gratuitously, and for some a small payment is made. This institution is intended partly as a training school for Deaconesses; but the

orphans are never allowed to become probationers until they have spent some time in the situations which are found for them, after their confirmation, in suitable families, so that they may see something of domestic life before they decide to return to the institution and become sisters. There are about forty-two orphans in the asylum, divided into three families under three Deaconesses.

7. The Asylum for Female Prisoners and Fallen Women. This is the oldest and most difficult to conduct of the institutions. It is the one which was begun by Pastor Fliedner before the Deaconess institution was established. It now contains usually from twenty to twenty-six inmates, who are divided into three classes, and live in two separate houses, which facilitates the classification and separation of the inmates. They generally remain from one to two years in the asylum, and suitable situations are found for them as soon as hopes are entertained of their being really reformed. In the thirty-three years of its existence, this asylum has received 520 inmates, 300 of whom have been sent to suitable situations, and a great proportion of whom have returned to a respectable manner of life.

8. The Seminary for Teachers. This has been established for thirty years, to train teachers for infant, elementary, and industrial schools, and for nurses and governesses. Above 1,100 teachers have been trained here, and the demand for teachers is twice or three times as great as can be supplied. It is also found impossible to receive all the candidates who offer themselves. The "teaching-sisters" among the probationers receive their instruction here, as well as the girls who are being trained for teaching on their own account. By far the greater number have chosen to be independent on leaving the seminary; but it often happens that after a time, "having experienced not only the sweetness of entire freedom and independence, but also to how many temptations they are exposed when standing alone, how little they enjoy the support and strengthening of a Christian community of life, and how little when their health is impaired by much teaching they can reckon upon a place of refuge and recovery, they come back and enter into the Deaconess sisterhood, to carry on the office of teaching and

education in this Christian fellowship of love, so that they may not only do good to the children entrusted to them, but care for and strengthen their own souls, as is needful."

The education and part of the instruction of the seminarists are undertaken by Deaconesses; part of the instruction by the Pastor Stricker and a master, under the direction of the Inspector.

9. The Feier-Abend House, or house of rest for infirm and sick sisters, with a room opening into the chapel of the institution, from which they can join in the service through a window.

10. There is also a house called "Salem," near Ratingen, two hours' journey from Kaiserswerth, where the sisters, when ill or overworked, are sent for rest and change of air.

Besides all these institutions at Kaiserswerth itself, there were, in December 1868, 145 "out-stations" in all parts of the world. Above forty hospitals and thirteen "mixed institutions" (institutions partly for the care of the sick and poor, partly for educational purposes) are served by Deaconesses from Kaiserswerth. Others have schools, or are sent to parishes to work under the clergy or ladies' associations among the poor. These are always sent out in company, at least two always living together. Deaconesses from Kaiserswerth are employed in this way in about thirty towns in Germany. Others are employed in private nursing among the rich, who pay the institution for their services. "In these houses, mostly of the educated classes, they often gain access to the hearts of sick people, who, for many years, would have nothing to do with God's word and His house and His servants; and through His grace they not seldom help to lead them from the broken cisterns of the world to the living spring of salvation. They also, by their personal services in these families, do more to disperse the prejudices which often exist against the Deaconess cause than can be done by any other means."

In national emergencies the Deaconesses have been repeatedly employed. In the war of Schleswig-Holstein in 1864, twenty-eight sisters were sent to the field of battle; and in 1866, fifty-

six were employed in the military hospitals, while thirty others had in their own stations the care of sick and wounded soldiers. At the same time thirty were employed, as has often been the case before, in nursing cholera patients, and several have lost their lives in these works.[1]

I am not able to give all the particulars I should wish to state, with regard to the internal organization of the institution which has spread thus widely. The fullest account of it is to be found in the "Haus Ordnung," or Rule of the Institution, a small printed but unpublished volume or tract, containing detailed regulations for every part of the service, which every Deaconess is required to sign, and of which a copy is given to each Deaconess on her consecration. I have in vain requested permission to publish either the whole of this document, or some extracts which I wished to make from it; but the Inspector, Pastor Disselhof, has assured me that there is no wish on the part of the Society to avoid publicity, and there is, so far as I know, no secret about the following facts:—

The Rhenish Westphalian Society for the training and employment of Evangelical Deaconesses was formally recognized, and the laws fixing its constitution approved by the King of Prussia, in 1846. It is governed by a council, which meets, as a rule, once a quarter at Kaiserswerth, and consists of the following members, all of whom must be members of the Evangelical[2] Church; a president, the assessors of the Rhenish and Westphalian Provincial Synods, a secretary and the inspector of the institution (both of which offices must be filled by clergymen of the Evangelical Church, and may be held by the same person), a treasurer, and from two to ten other members, one of whom must be a medical man in practice. The council may be convened more frequently at the request of the secretary. The internal management of the institution is in the hands of the Inspector and the Superinten-

1 This chapter was written before the declaration of the war between France and Germany. The time has not yet come for ascertaining the extent of their services on this occasion.

2 The name appropriated to the Lutheran Church in Germany.

dent (*Vorsteherin*) or Mother as she is called. These offices are now held by the son-in-law and the widow of Pastor Fliedner. The Superintendent is assisted by a council, the members of which, as well as the holders of all subordinate posts of authority in the mother-house, are chosen by herself from among the other Deaconesses. The Deaconesses, on their consecration, bind themselves to serve for five years, unless special reasons, recognized as sufficient by the directors of the institution, shall arise for their giving up the office before the expiration of that time. Before their admission, however, they are required to declare that they intend to adopt the office of Deaconess as their calling for life. Upon their consecration, they are required to sign the "Haus Ordnung" or Rule, and to pledge themselves to keep it faithfully, to maintain a Christian and dignified demeanour, to avoid making or continuing any intimate acquaintance with men, and other earthly ties, and all unbecoming or even unnecessary correspondence, and to devote themselves, with all their powers, exclusively to their office.

As the best means in my power of supplying information about the organization and spirit of the institution, I subjoin the conditions of admission, published in the pamphlet already referred to,[1] and the consecration service published by Pastor Fliedner.

Conditions of Admission to the Office of Deaconess, as Nursing Sister, or Teaching Sister, in the Deaconess Institution at Kaiserswerth.

I. Admission to the Nursing Deaconess office :—

(1) The Christian women who wish to undertake the office of a nursing sister as Deaconess for the sick and poor, must possess a somewhat advanced Christian knowledge.

Mere church membership, mere attendance on Christian assemblies, and reading of Christian works of edification, is not enough. The love of reading the word of God, and a

[1] Nachricht über das Diakonissen-Werk. Von J. Disselhof.

diligent use of the same for a long time past, must exist, as well as a knowledge of the more important histories of the Old and New Testaments. There must also be a knowledge of the sinful heart from their own personal experience, as well as experience of the grace of Christ, in order that they may have learnt to despair of themselves, and in their weakness to trust only to the strength of Christ.

(2) A Christian walk of life must for a long time have adorned such Christian women; they must on their application refer to one or more persons of whom the direction can inquire concerning them.

They must have not only a good report before all men, which however is also necessary, and which the Apostles require of the deacons (Acts vi. 3), must therefore not only not be women who have formerly fallen, but must already for a long time have proved their conversion by their good works, by a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price, by humility and childlike obedience towards parents, masters, or others set over them, through diligence, peaceableness, and self-denying love for the good of their neighbour so far as their circumstances have given them the opportunity, and through an earnest striving to walk before God and man in simplicity and purity.

They must therefore on their application send in (*a*) a sealed certificate of character (*Sittenzeugniss*), as detailed as possible, from their spiritual pastor (*Seelsorger*).

They must also have no inclination to heaviness or sadness of spirit, but have acquired cheerfulness, kindness, and a loving behaviour.

In putting forward such qualities as conditions of admission, of course perfection in these qualities is not at all demanded, only partly an earnest evangelical striving after further growth in them, partly a disposition of mind in respect of those qualities in which, as for instance in respect of cheerfulness, natural temperament considerably helps or hinders. A disposition to melancholy may be so deeply seated in a person's temperament that, with the most earnest striving against it, he cannot attain to the cheerfulness which is necessary in

the care of the sick and poor, while he may nevertheless be a very good Christian.

(3) Bodily health is necessary; as to which it is not so much a large robust bodily frame that is required, as that they should not have weak irritable nerves, weak chests, any tendency to scrofula, or other forerunners and tokens of sickliness. Whoever comes here for the nursing probation, therefore, must first send in (*b*) an exact, sealed certificate of health, given by the physician of the district or the nearest medical officer.

(4) The age must, as a rule, be above 18 and under 40 years. Under special circumstances exceptions with respect to age are allowable.

(5) They must have knowledge of and practice in ordinary household work, such as knitting, sewing, washing, cleaning, and the like, and especially orderliness and pleasure in work. The employments of a nursing Deaconess include not only the care of the sick in their rooms and in visiting the poor, but also cooking and the care of the housekeeping for sick and well, the care of the washing and linen, &c. It is not any proficiency in these works which is required, but before everything a hearty willingness for Christ's sake bravely to undertake whatever work comes to hand, however unaccustomed and difficult it may be, and to learn it as well as possible, as humble scholars. In their employment in these works, of course, all due regard will be had to their bodily fitness and former circumstances.

(6) They must speak German well, and be able to read, write, and cipher well.

On application for admission, they must send in (*c*) a short account of their lives, written by themselves, respecting their previous outward and inward experiences (*Lebensführungen*), in which the chief thing is a simple unadorned representation, flowing from their own heart and hand, and not completed or improved by any one else, even if there should be faults in the writing. In the account of their lives they are to state—the place and day of their birth; their Christian and surnames; dwelling-place, rank and position of their parents, and, if dead, the place and day of their death; also what catechism they

have learned, and whether they still know it; what hymns they know by heart, and whether they are able simply to relate the most important Bible histories.

Further, they must send in (*d*) the written consent of their parents or guardians to their entrance upon the office of Deaconess, somewhat in the following form:—

"I give my daughter N or M permission, on the conditions of admission with which I am acquainted, to enter the Deaconess institution at Kaiserswerth as a probationer, and, if she should be found fit for the Deaconess calling, as a Deaconess."

Place. *Date.* *Signature.*

(7) When they come here, they must bring a pass or a certificate from the temporal authorities.

(8) They have to pass through a time of probation and instruction of from six to twelve months, or, if required, of as much as two or three years. During the first year of probation they receive board and lodging gratis. If after the end of the first year of probation they are not yet thought fit for admission to the office of Deaconess, they receive, from the second year of probation, clothing and pocket-money as required. At their entrance they receive from the institution caps, collars, and aprons, gratis, which they are bound to wear. They have to bring with them some simple dark-coloured working-day dresses, and at least one dark-coloured simple Sunday dress, beside sufficient underclothing and linen, according to instructions sent them before their entrance, and pocket-money, besides their Bible and hymn-book.

II. Admission to the Teaching Deaconess Office:—

(*a*) As Deaconess for teaching little children.

Whoever wishes to devote herself as a teaching sister, especially to the education and instruction of little children in infant-schools (*Kleinkinderschulen*), or orphan-houses, or similar educational institutions, must possess the same knowledge and Christian dispositions, the same mental qualifications and bodily health, and be of the same age, as are above required of Christian women offering themselves as nursing sisters. Besides

this, they must have a gift for singing, and a musical ear, and must send in their school-certificates, as well as the other above-mentioned certificates and other papers.

(*b*) As teaching Deaconess for elementary and higher girls' schools.

Whoever wishes to devote herself as a teaching sister to education and instruction in elementary schools, higher girls' schools, and similar school and educational institutions, &c., must, in the first place, possess the same Christian disposition and mental qualifications, and the same bodily health, and be of the same age, as are above required of Christian women offering themselves as nursing sisters.

Besides this, she must possess the following qualifications :—She must be able to write a letter, a short description, &c., without mistakes in spelling or grammar, and in a good handwriting, and to work sums in the four rules of arithmetic, simple and compound, for integers and fractions ; she must have some musical knowledge, especially of singing, also so much knowledge of Bible history as to be able to relate the more important histories, and must know several good hymns by heart. Further, she must know a few of the principal facts of German history, and so much geography as to be acquainted with the quarters of the globe, the countries of Europe and of Germany, and not to be quite ignorant of natural history. She must therefore send in her school-certificates beforehand.

Those Christian women who believe themselves to have an inward and outward calling to become teaching Deaconesses of one or the other kind, must, in order that we may first become better acquainted with them, as a rule be employed for some months in the mother-house here, according to our appointment, in the care of children, household work, &c., in order that we may try whether they are altogether suitable for the office of Deaconess.

They must bring with them their Bible, their hymn-book, and the best of the books and music by which they have prepared themselves.

After their entrance upon the seminary course of training, which lasts, as a rule, one year for the office of infant-school

teaching Deaconess, two years for the office of elementary-school teaching Deaconess, and three years for the office of teacher in a higher girls' school; they receive, as probationers, gratuitous instruction, as well as board and lodging in the mother-house, also caps, collars, and aprons, which they are bound to wear. They must themselves provide the rest of their clothing, according to the instructions which are sent them, before their entrance here, their books and other means of education, and their pocket-money, for as long as the course of training lasts. Those who wish to enter on the seminary course immediately upon their arrival here, must enter the seminary as seminarists under the usual conditions, and paying the seminary expenses for at least half a year. If at the end of the course of instruction they serve the institution, they receive the usual pocket-money of the sisters.

If, either before or after the end of the course of instruction, they leave without becoming teaching or nursing Deaconesses, they must repay their board and the price of instruction to seminarists for the time during which they have received the course of instruction gratis. These expenses amount to twelve thalers (about 1*l.* 16*s.*) a month. In like manner, when they are appointed as teaching sisters, if they give up the work before the expiration of five years, whether of their own accord, or being recalled by their parents or guardians, or through illness, or because they have been dismissed by the Deaconess Institution for bad behaviour, or the like, they must repay the seminary expenses, and also for every year wanting of the time of work undertaken (five years) one-fifth.

Those Christian women who have already in part or completely gone through a course of instruction, or who have already practically proved their ability to teach, need not go through the whole or part of our course of instruction, inasmuch as they do not require it. Their time of probation will therefore be shortened according to circumstances.

(9) All probationers must be unbetrothed, and their heart still free.

(10) All probationers, for the nursing as well as the teaching vocation, must pay their own travelling expenses hither, and

also the expense of the journey back, whether they leave voluntarily, or upon internal or external grounds are not considered suitable for the Deaconess' calling.

(11) No probationer is to bring beds, furniture, or unnecessary articles of dress.

(12) If after completing their time of probation they are found fit for the office of Deaconess, they must pledge themselves (*sich verpflichten*) for at least five years to this office.

They then receive twenty-five thalers a year for clothing and pocket-money, as well as the house-costume gratis; that is, a blue gown for working days, a blue apron, white caps, and white collars.

If the Deaconesses in the faithful fulfilment of their office become disabled or sick, and possess no means, the Direction assists in providing for them for the future, either in the mother-house or otherwise.

Kaiserswerth am Rhein,
Direction of the Deaconess Institution.

CONDITIONS UPON WHICH DEACONESS-PUPILS ARE RECEIVED IN THE DEACONESS INSTITUTION OF KAISERSWERTH AM RHEIN.

For years many evangelical Christians have expressed a lively wish to enter our Deaconess Institution as probationers before they had attained the prescribed age of eighteen. The desire to serve the Lord in His distressed members was honest, and very generally arose out of the first love to the Saviour, powerfully awakened at the time of confirmation. Not seldom the first love cooled down in subsequent years, because it did not receive the necessary nourishment.

We have therefore resolved to receive such young Christians as Deaconess-pupils in our institution, and to prepare them practically and theoretically for the Deaconess' calling. They receive free training and free instruction. After completing their eighteenth year, if found fit for it, they are received as nursing or teaching probationers.

The chief condition of admission is an unfeigned piety, and the honest desire to prove to the Lord, by deeds, thankful love in return for His unspeakable love. No persuasion on the part of parents and guardians is to take place. The wish to serve the Lord must have arisen from the free, sincere resolution of the young Christians.

On application, the following papers are to be sent in :—

1. A certificate of church-membership and character (*Kirchen und Sittenzeugniss*) from the pastor. This must be as detailed as possible, and sealed by the clergyman himself.

2. A certificate of health delivered by the physician of the district or the nearest medical officer.

3. A short life-history of the previous inward and outward experiences of the future Deaconess-pupil. It must be composed and written by herself, and must not be in any way corrected by any one else. In the life-history is to be given the place and day of birth, Christian and surname, dwelling-place, and rank and position of parents, and, in case of their death, the place and day of death.

4. The written consent of the parents or guardians to entrance into the Deaconess Institution in this place, with the express declaration that they will provide the pocket-money for clothes, books, &c., of the Deaconess-pupil till she shall have completed her nineteenth year.

For the probationer teaching sisters, who are gratuitously instructed in our seminary, and during the seminary course receive free training in the mother-house, pocket-money must be guaranteed by the parents or guardians till the end of the seminary course. The course for infant schools lasts a year, for elementary schools two years, for higher girls' schools three years.

On entrance, a pass or certificate of the municipal authorities, and for foreigners a certificate of residence (*Heimathschein*), is to be presented.

In other things our conditions of admission to the office of Deaconess apply.

Kaiserswerth am Rhein,
Direction of the Deaconess Institution.

Consecration Service.

A form of service used in the consecration (*Einsegnung*) of seven Deaconesses at Kaiserswerth, on the 8th July, 1844, was published by Pastor Fliedner at the desire of friends, partly to furnish an example for the use of other Deaconess Institutions, partly as a means of removing the prejudice existing in the minds of some Protestants, to the effect that the office of Deaconess was akin to unscriptural monasticism.

The service begins with a hymn, which is followed by a short discourse upon the history and duties of the office of Deaconess, the holders of which are to be servants (*Dienerinnen*) (1) of the Lord Jesus, (2) of the sick and poor for Jesus' sake, and (3) of each other. And, finally, as Christian servants they are to honour with childlike obedience the directors (*Vorstand*) of the Deaconess Institution, who labour for them with parental love, and are set over them in the Lord. The pastor then proceeds:—

"Before the face of God and of this Christian assembly I now ask you:

"Are you determined faithfully to fulfil these duties of the office of Deaconess in the fear of the Lord, according to His holy Word? Then answer, Yes!

"Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd and Bishop of your souls, seal your acknowledgment and vow (*Bekenntniss und Gelübde*) with his Yea and Amen, and for ever acknowledge you as His own!—Amen.

"Step nearer, and give me and the superintendent your right hand in confirmation of your promise.

"Kneel down.

"May the Triune God, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, bless you! May He give you faithfulness until death, and then the crown of life! Amen.

"And you, dear festal assembly, who wish them salvation and blessing, let us pray for them! Come let us pray, kneel and fall down before the Lord who has made us!"

Prayer by the congregation, kneeling:

"Father of mercies, who hast drawn these maidens to Thy

Son, so that they have given themselves to Him for a possession, and have willed to serve Him with all the powers of their bodies and souls in the care of the sick and poor, we humbly pray thee, give them Thy compassion, direct their hearts to Thy love and to the patience of Christ, draw them quite away from the world and from themselves, so that they may live and move only in Thee, and may always rejoice in Thy favour!

"Lord Jesus Christ, Thou compassionate High Priest, who hast bought these souls with Thy blood, which belong to Thee of right, and have devoted themselves to Thy service for everlasting faithfulness, lighten them further with the light of Thy word, strengthen the weak with Thy strength, and give them a rich measure of Thy gentleness and humility, that they may acknowledge themselves as unworthy servants before Thee, so that they may desire to be and to do nothing, nothing at all of themselves, but something only to the praise of Thy glorious grace!

"God the Holy Ghost, Thou Spirit of peace, fill them with Thy peace, so that as messengers of peace they may bring peace into sick-rooms, into families, and into the sisterly circle, that they may be adorned with a meek and quiet spirit more and more, that they may emulate each other in undertaking the hardest service, and allow themselves to be governed by the spirit of obedience towards all those set over them (*Vorgesetzten*), as if obeying Thee!

"And thus let them experience, O Triune God, that they serve Thee Thyself and not men; let Thy peace flow over them like a river! Thy glad Spirit preserve them, so that they may continually experience more and more that it is good to be in Thy service, and that godliness has the promise of this life as well as of that which is to come!

"And when they go into strange countries in their difficult calling, then go Thou with them, as with Jacob, and keep them by Thy angels in all their ways, that they may bear them in their hands, so that they hurt not their foot against a stone; lead them with Thy fatherly hand, guide them with Thy motherly eyes, so that they may not fear, even though they walk through the dark valley! And when their last hour

strikes, then clothe them in the white garment of Thy righteousness, give the palm of victory into their hands, and deck them with the crown of life! Amen, Amen."

Then follows a hymn; then before the celebration of the Lord's Supper (of which the newly-consecrated Deaconesses partake), the following exhortation is addressed to them:—

"Thus have ye now entered as servants of Christ into His holy vineyard! Thus has the blessed office been appointed to you, of ministering to your Saviour in His weak and sick members. Arise then, arise, beloved sisters, gird yourselves as wise virgins for His service. Behold the Bridegroom comes. Go ye out to meet Him, with your lamps in your hands! He stands at the door and knocks, in the form indeed of a servant, in the poor and miserable around you. Let Him in! Feed Him in the hungry, clothe Him in the naked, receive Him in the children, visit Him in the prisoners, bind His wounds in the sick, and attend Him in the dead to the last rest!

"A blessed office, but also a difficult office! How soon will the hands become weary, and the knees totter! But, praise be to God, you know your heavenly Bridegroom, as He comes to you in another form than the form of a servant, as the Lord of glory, who heals with the oil of gladness of His Holy Spirit. Therefore have you desired to come to this table of grace. You say, I am weak! Shall I feed Thee, Lord? Oh come, and do Thou feed me!

"And behold, there is He, the King of glory, and He says, 'Come unto me, all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will refresh you.' There stands He, the Bridegroom, in heavenly majesty, and will adorn you with His wedding garments, and will give to you Himself and all His divine strength in the communion of His body and blood.

"Oh, ye have done well that ye are come. All is ready. Open, then, your hands, open your mouth and your heart, and receive out of His fulness grace for grace! Yes, taste and see that the Lord is gracious. Blessed is he who trusteth in Him!"

Then follows the celebration of the Lord's Supper; after which the service concludes with a prayer of thanksgiving, a hymn, and a blessing.

CHAPTER VI.

TRAINING INSTITUTION FOR NURSES AT LIVERPOOL.

THE following account of the Training Institution for Nurses at Liverpool, and of the system of "District Nursing" established in that city in connection with it, is taken almost entirely from a pamphlet called "The Organization of Nursing in a large Town," by a member of the Committee of the Home and Training School, published by Holden, Church Street, Liverpool, 1865.

The scheme of establishing a Training Institution for Nurses in connection with the Royal Infirmary, the principal hospital in Liverpool, originated in 1861 with some of the inhabitants of that city, whose names are not given in the pamphlet on "The Organization of Nursing;" but the Committee of the Institution is there described as consisting, "not of benevolent enthusiasts or philanthropists by profession, but of practical men of business, who have abundant work and large experience in commerce, in politics, and in life, who know the value of time and money, and would not bestow either on an enterprise in which they did not find the results proportionate to the expenditure."

The objects of the Institution are thus explained in a prospectus which was published for the purpose of obtaining the necessary funds:—

"The Liverpool Training School and Home for Nurses is intended to supply a want universally felt by medical men, and now generally acknowledged by the public.

"The work which the new Institution is designed to effect divides itself into three heads, viz.:—

"1. To provide thoroughly educated professional nurses for the infirmary.

"2. To provide district or missionary nurses for the poor.

"3. To provide sick-nurses for private families.

"1. *To provide thoroughly educated professional nurses for the Infirmary.*—There are in the Infirmary nurses of whose efficiency and kindness we cannot speak too highly, but the supply of good hospital nurses is quite inadequate to the requirements. And the misconduct of the unsuitable ones, who, from necessity, are employed, discredits a profession which is in its nature most honourable, and would otherwise attract many whose ability and character would peculiarly fit them for its duties. We refer to the testimony of the Medical Board on this point, and need hardly point out how much might be done by a complete system of nursing to save life and health, and to make the expenditure of an hospital more effective, by giving increased power to the medical and other agencies, and by abridging the period requisite to effect a cure.

"2. *To provide district or missionary nurses for the poor.*—In cases which are not suitable for, and cannot be reached by, hospitals, to do in nursing what the dispensaries do for them in medical aid. We propose to furnish nurses to those districts which will, by means of local committees or individuals, find the necessary medical comforts and superintendence. The results of district nursing, though only tried on a small scale and with an imperfect organization, have been invariably satisfactory. It relieves an amount of suffering most intense in its character, and capable of alleviation, to a great extent, by a proportionately small expenditure. It does more than this; it teaches the people to nurse their own sick, and, by introducing a knowledge of sanitary laws among the working classes, tends to prevent illness and strengthen health.

"In a merely economical point of view, by restoring parents to their work and place, it often prevents whole families from steadily sinking into hopeless poverty, misery, and vice, the consequences of which, in the end, take vengeance on society for its neglected duties.

"In a moral and political point of view, aid thus given to the

suffering poor does away with an irritation against God and man, the extent of which is not suspected by those who have not been in a position to see it. Such irritation is the frequent result of extreme suffering, when unmitigated by assistance from those who have the power to give it, leading men to brood bitterly over an inequality of conditions to which they are not reconciled by experiencing in their need the alleviation which wealth and knowledge could and should have provided. Assistance thus bestowed would open the hearts of the sufferers and of their families to all benevolent persons in their attempts to benefit the working classes, physically, morally, and religiously.

"3. *To provide sick-nurses for private families.*—It is a fact well known by medical men that far more patients die unnecessarily (or live with permanently impaired health), from defective nursing, in families who could and would gladly pay for efficient nursing, if procurable, than even under the defective nursing which, till lately, was almost general in hospitals. Most of the hospital nurses had at least some knowledge of what they were about. However devoted and watchful the relative or the private nurse may be, while she is gaining her experience of what ought to be done, the object of her care has often passed out of its reach, or her own health has given way, and death has thus multiplied its victims. If relieved by the aid of a trained nurse, she might with an easy mind have left her charge and obtained the necessary rest."

After giving an account of the inquiries which had been made, and the advice received from various persons of well-known experience and authority in these matters, the prospectus proceeds to estimate the probable expense of the undertaking.

"Arrangements have been made for the erection, on the land belonging to the Infirmary, of a building capable of accommodating a staff of nurses, with a superintendent, a deputy superintendent if required, and three servants. Funds have been provided for its erection. The subsequent expenses it is impossible to estimate exactly at the outset of an entirely new undertaking. Money is required to furnish the building,

to carry on the education and pay the wages of the nurses employed, and to provide for casualties incident to the nature of the employment.

"To furnish the building entirely, would cost about 1,000*l.*; but we shall probably not require to furnish the whole at first.

"The permanent annual indoor expenses will include the salaries and maintenance of the Lady Superintendent, three servants, and about thirty-one nurses, the number likely to be under training and engaged in the Infirmary at one and the same time. The sum required for such salaries and maintenance will probably exceed the sum received for nursing the Infirmary by 300*l.*

"The expenses of lighting and warming the building, taxes, &c., are uncertain.

"Each district or missionary nurse will cost from 30*l.* to 40*l.* a year.

"At first, the whole expenditure of the Institution, over and above the sum received from the Infirmary, must be met by donations and subscriptions. It is to be hoped that, in time, the sums received for private nursing, by those who can afford to pay, will cover a considerable part of the indoor expenses. Then the revenue derived from subscriptions would be devoted entirely to that part of the work which is in its essence charitable and gratuitous—the nursing of the poor, and of those who, though educated and belonging to the middle ranks, are yet too poor to provide efficient nurses for themselves.

"From 800*l.* to 1,000*l.* a year would probably be necessary, to supply such a staff of nurses for this department of our work as the town requires. To this amount the Institution must be permanently dependent on charitable support. A large reserve ought to be accumulated during the early years of the Institution, as later there will be expenses incident to the nature of the occupation.

"Though we have named the above amounts as requisite for the full development of our scheme, we shall do our best to make the sums entrusted to us, whether great or small, available to the utmost in the work for which they are given."

The steps by which that scheme was carried into execution

are thus described: "The School was the foundation of our enterprise; and the School was of necessity dependent on the Infirmary. It was necessary, therefore, to obtain the consent and assistance of the committee by which that Institution is managed. This they were willing to afford; but they were anxious before all things, and very properly anxious, that there should be no risk of collision or conflict arising from divided and clashing authorities. To meet this objection, we placed ourselves unreservedly in their hands. The Home is built on the ground, and is the absolute property, of the Infirmary. The Committee of the School are selected from the Infirmary Committee, the Chairman and Treasurer being *ex officio* members. Though this subjection to the authorities of the Hospital was with us a matter of necessity, we should adopt it, had we the option, as a matter of wisdom. Where it can be done without unfairness to existing officers, it is desirable to carry the union still further. The Lady Superintendent of the School should also be the Matron of the Hospital, and the female officers of both should be entirely under her control.

"Our next step was to seek for a lady able and willing to undertake the office of Superintendent. This was no easy task. Our organization was on a large scale; and though some of its objects had elsewhere been carried out singly with success, their combination was a new feature in our enterprise. To take charge of such an Institution from its very commencement, no ordinary qualities were required. A lady competent for such a post must be endowed with considerable energy and a hopeful spirit; must have strong religious principles, yet be free from anything like sectarian prejudice and bigotry; must possess a clear and sound judgment; must be devoted to her work, and have skill to select, and moral and mental power to control and inspire, a number of young women brought together under circumstances affording them great opportunities of usefulness and self-improvement, but at the same time exposing them to considerable temptations. We were fortunate enough to find a lady who possessed the requisite qualifications, and to prevail on her to undertake the work. She went to the Nightingale School, in connection with St. Thomas's Hospital,

and to King's College Hospital, which is in charge of the Sisters of St. John's House, to make herself acquainted with the system and organization of those two nursing schools, the method of study, and the surgical and medical training therein pursued.

"Matters had then reached the point at which we felt ourselves prepared to introduce our plans to the public. We called a public meeting, and invited and obtained donations and subscriptions."

The Nurses' Home was built at the expense of one member of the committee. It is thus described in the pamphlet :—"It was cheap, and has been found to answer very well, being light, airy, and cheerful. To visitors I may as well say, that the decoration and ornaments, which might seem unnecessary, have not been executed or furnished at the expense of the Institution, but have been given by its friends or those of the Lady Superintendent. I think, moreover, that such ornaments have been by no means useless, in attracting the nurses, and attaching them to their Home.

"Ugly and ungraceful habitations are hardly economical, where it is desired to inspire a feeling of pride and affection in those who are to live and be educated there.

"After the Lady Superintendent had, as above stated, passed some time at King's College and St. Thomas's Hospitals, and was ready to undertake her duties, we obtained the assistance, as training nurses, of several of those educated in the school in connection with the latter institution, established by the trustees of the Nightingale Fund. Of the system under which these nurses had been educated we cannot speak too highly; nor can we too gratefully acknowledge the benefits we, through their assistance, derived from it. Under these training nurses were placed the young women selected for education in the School, applicants of from twenty-five to thirty-five being preferred. These probationers received, while under training, fourteen guineas a year, and afterwards were employed in the Infirmary, in district nursing, or private families, at a rate of wages varying with efficiency and length of service. The Hospital and private nursing is entirely

under the direction of the Lady Superintendent, by whom it is managed in conformity with the rules laid down by the Infirmary and School Committees. The Lady Superintendent and a few probationers spent their first year in a hired house in the neighbourhood of the Home, which they entered on the 1st of May, 1862."

The Report of the Committee for the year 1864 gives the following account of the progress of the Institution :—

"This is the first year in which we can be said to be at full work in the Hospital and in the greater part of the town. Our staff of nurses is still insufficient to meet even the present demands upon us, while experience of the value of trained nurses seems to increase the demand far more rapidly than we can hope to find and train women suitable for the work. Success in the past year gives us confidence that every year will increase the efficiency and usefulness of each branch of our undertaking. The Lady Superintendent's care of the young women under her charge gains their respect and affection, and retains most entirely the confidence of the Committee and medical authorities. The Report of the Lady Superintendent is as follows :—

"'GENTLEMEN,—Since the beginning of 1864, thirty-three young women have been admitted as probationers; five of these have left, being unsuitable for the occupation. Besides these, several older women have been engaged as assistant nurses, or with a hope that they would prove useful as district nurses; but the need of earlier training has in almost every case become a barrier to their continuing in the service.

"'The most effectual help has been given us, in finding suitable candidates, by ladies and gentlemen in various parts of the country, who have communicated with the Superintendent; and latterly, when vacancies have occurred, we have had no difficulty, by this means, in procuring those who could fill them. Many have been introduced through the nurses and probationers already here. At present we have no vacancy in the house, and there are several applicants on the list for whom we have no room. Our staff of nurses, exclusive of the twenty-

eight probationers, consists of fourteen in the Infirmary, ten sent out to nurse in private houses, and fourteen placed in the various districts of Liverpool to nurse the poor.

"'No considerable additions have been made to the Library, the books of which have been pretty generally read, and more would be acceptable.

"'Evening classes have been held twice a week in the House for Probationers.

"'Amongst so large a number of young persons it is unlikely that all would prove equally good and useful; but I have pleasure in assuring you that, on the whole, I have reason to consider the conduct and efficiency of our women satisfactory. There has been a great deal of quiet and steady self-sacrifice in their work, as well as hearty obedience to those they serve. I hope and believe that, almost without exception, they become attached to their employment and to their Home, and that the foundation is thus laid for the permanent welfare of the Institution.

"'I am, Gentlemen,
"'Yours faithfully,
(Signed) "'M. MERRYWEATHER,
"'*Lady Superintendent.*'

"We have to record our sincere thanks to the members of the Medical Board and to the House Surgeon, for the confidence and assistance the Lady Superintendent and nurses have received from them. They have often spoken with approval of the conduct and efficiency of the nurses—qualities in which we hope each year will show further progress.

"Miss E. Merryweather has again most kindly spent nearly the whole of the year in helping her sister; and her experience and knowledge of nursing, and unwearied gentleness and kindness, have been most useful, and deserve the gratitude of this Society."

The Training School still continues to prosper. In the spring of 1868 I was informed by the Lady Superintendent, Miss Merryweather, that there were at that time about forty-

five nurses (including two probationers) employed in the Infirmary (which contains 250 beds), seven of whom were night nurses and thirty-eight day nurses.

This branch of the work of course remains nearly stationary as regards the number of women employed, whatever improvement there may be in the degree of efficiency attained by them.

The extent to which the amount of nursing in private families undertaken by the Institution has increased is shown by the following table, kindly prepared for me by Miss Merryweather :—

	Nurses.	Payments received. £	s.	d.
1863	5	44	6	6
1864	10	292	0	0
1865	15	456	7	0
1866	11	698	8	6
1867	12	619	12	6
1868	18	870	5	6

"1866 was the year of cholera, which weakened our staff for private nursing.—M. M."

The Committee propose to enlarge the house in order to admit of further increase in this branch of the work. It is believed that this, which is the only remunerative part of the work, might thus be so much extended as that the returns from it should cover the expense of the district nursing. The nursing gratuitously bestowed on the poor would thus in effect be paid for by the richer patients who avail themselves of the services of the Institution. The rate of remuneration for the attendance of the nurses is fixed at 1*l.* 1*s.* a week, 15*s.* extra in infectious cases to provide temporary lodgings for the nurse, travelling expenses and washing to be paid for by the employers. But the part of the work which is most interesting, as bearing upon the questions to be hereafter discussed in this work, is the system of district nursing, now in vigorous operation all over Liverpool. I avail myself of the opportunity of giving full details respecting it, by making large extracts from the pamphlet on the "Organization of Nursing," which will show how it arose, and what extent and form it has now assumed in Liverpool.

"If," says the writer, "there has been so much neglect in the application of available means for the recovery of health and for the alleviation of suffering among the educated and rich, how fearful is, and must be, the unavoidable waste of human life and health, how incalculable the unnecessary misery, among the uneducated and poor! It is not surprising, then, that as soon as attention was directed to the importance of nursing, the idea occurred to many that some effort should be made to mitigate this evil; and experiments have been tried in many quarters, in ignorance of such attempts elsewhere. . . . We believe we are correct in stating that the result of these independent experiments shows not only that the relief given, in proportion to expense, &c., has surprised all those engaged in the work, but that the unexpected and incidental advantages arising from it are greater than its more immediate and evident effects. This will, perhaps, be most easily made clear by an example.

"In Liverpool, experience of sickness led to this desire to lessen in some measure the unavoidable disease, pain, and death in the homes of the poor; an experienced nurse was furnished with a few cushions, blankets, an iron bedstead, bed-rest, &c., and sent to visit sick cases pointed out to her, within certain districts, by parties whose judgment could be relied upon: she was to show the people how to manage their sick better, and help them to do so. The wife of one of the Scripture readers kindly undertook the preparation and issue of sago and other medical comforts to those so visited. The success attained has been far beyond the most sanguine hopes which any of those who made the attempt ventured to form. Though at first the attention of the nurse was mainly given to consumptive cases (as those which cannot well be provided for by any of our Liverpool hospitals), with the idea of mitigating the extreme misery often attending the last stages of that fearful complaint, yet the number of cases in which apparently hopeless disease was arrested, and heads of families were enabled to return to their work, would, in an economical point of view alone, have repaid a far larger expenditure than was incurred. Of course, in dealing with consumption, the

cases were still more numerous where great suffering, and often consequent bitterness and hardened discontent, were changed into comparative ease, peace, and thankfulness.

"There is surely something horrible even to human feelings in the idea that a fellow-creature's last hours should be passed in suffering, enmity, and bitterness, which our care might have prevented. The nurse—who, after the first week's visiting, came back crying, saying that she could not bear the scenes she had to witness—soon found that the good she could do was so clear and satisfactory, that she is happy and contented, and has quite given up her wish to return to her former work of nursing the rich. But, in addition to alleviating pain and restoring health, the plan was found the most natural and efficient means of conveying to the poor increased sanitary knowledge, improved habits of cleanliness and neatness in their houses. Instruction, coming as a natural and necessary part of the nurse's duty to the sick, is felt as no interference, raises no opposition, and its authority is enforced by the visible and immediate improvement effected by the nurse in the health or comfort of the patient.

"Nor is the evil stayed and the good done merely sanitary. The effect of hopeless misery is often to produce recklessness and crime in those in contact with it.

"The nurse had two cases in six months, where, the wife's sickness having thrown the household into disorder, the husband, unable to witness misery which he did not know how to alleviate, or to bear the utter wretchedness of his home, had taken to drinking. The nurse showed what might be done to alleviate suffering and restore order; the husbands, who were kind, industrious men, became sober again, and they and their families were saved. . . . .

"The attention of the nurse was naturally most frequently directed to the cases requiring her care by the various ministers of religion; and the feeling that Christian sympathy and kindness have sought out and alleviated the physical diseases of the poor proves a most efficient preparation for the more important work of religion. From the way, moreover, in which cases are brought under the notice of the nurse (being sought out, not

having sought relief), or from its being less easy to deceive the doctor than it often is the charitable reliever of destitution, the work has, so far, seemed remarkably free from imposition or discontent; the visits of the nurse, and the material aid given, though often very small in quantity, have been received with gratitude, and without the usual grumbling as to their insufficiency. Little extras or luxuries (for so they appear to the poor) have seemed natural expressions of goodwill, and are not calculated to wound those feelings of self-respect and independence which are more important than health itself.

"As few families are without sickness at one time or other, it is difficult to over-estimate the amount of good, physical and moral, which might be done in this manner. Gradually, as this became more apparent, it was sought to extend the experiment.

"With a view to the organization of the district nursing, the town was divided into sixteen (now[1] nineteen) districts, each containing two or more ecclesiastical districts. We adhered, as far as possible, to ecclesiastical boundaries, because, while the limitation of the district was a matter of indifference to the Dissenters, the coincidence of its limits with those of their cures much facilitated the co-operation in our work of the clergy of the Established Church. Each nursing district contains from 11,500 to 41,347 inhabitants, the average being 24,929. The number of cases under a nurse's care at one time varies very much, being greater in winter than in summer: some, it must be observed, require only occasional visits. . . . .

"The Central Society only undertakes to pay the wages (including board-wages) of the district nurses. It was necessary, therefore, to find in each district ladies able and willing not only to superintend her work, but to provide or raise the funds required to pay for the nurse's lodging, for medicine, food, and comforts for her patients, and so forth. In 1864 the expenditure under these heads averaged 80*l*. a district . . . . .

"This district expenditure is met as follows:—In *three* districts the funds are provided by members of the religious congregation to which the local Lady Superintendent belongs.

[1] 1870.

In *one*, the wife of a clergyman whose cure is included within the district is Lady Superintendent, and raises the funds by subscription. In *one*, the clergyman, aided by three non-resident subscribers of 10*l.* each, has become responsible for the funds, and a lady-parishioner for the superintendence. In *one*, the wife of the minister of a large dissenting congregation has undertaken the superintendent's duty, and her husband has engaged to raise one-half the cost by subscriptions from his congregation, the other half being provided by employers of labour within the district and other men of property. In *one*, subscriptions of from 2*l.* to 10*l.* from employers of labour within the district, and men of fortune unconnected with it, provide the requisite funds. In *one*, a gentleman who has ceased to reside in Liverpool furnishes 40*l.* a year, the Lady Superintendent finding the rest. In *one*, a mercantile firm pays the cost. In *seven*, the Lady Superintendent or her family pays the whole or the principal part.

"In December 1864, the Liverpool Central Relief Society agreed in certain cases to give meat to patients under the charge of the district nurses, to send convalescents to the seaside when desirable, and to relieve the families of patients, if found deserving.

"The Lady Superintendent of each district being found, funds provided, and a trained nurse established there, it only remains for the Central Society to ascertain, by periodical inspection, the efficiency of the nurses, and the due execution of the intentions of its subscribers.[1] In other respects, all duties of management and direction in district nursing devolve upon the Local Superintendents, each lady being supreme in her own district, and solely responsible for its management. The first point is to find a lodging for the nurse; the next, to find some one to take charge of the stores, and to cook the sago, rice,

1 This is done very effectively by the Assistant-Secretary and Outdoor Inspector of Nurses—a lady whose duty is solely to inspect the nurses, and in no way to criticise the management of the district, or, unless requested by the Local Superintendent, to take any part in its arrangements. She is, however, often of great use in making arrangements or inquiries at the parish offices and other institutions; or, in the absence and at the request of the Lady Superintendent, taking the charge of the districts.

beef-tea, and so forth for the patients. It is desirable that both the place for cooking and the nurse's lodging should be in a central position; and this is especially important in regard to the cooking, as, though some member of the sufferer's family, or a friendly neighbour, can generally bring the food from a short distance, they often cannot go far for it. If a respectable tradesman's wife, or some other resident in the district, can be found to undertake the cooking from a wish to take a share in the good work, nothing better can be desired; but it is rarely that the same person has both the will and the means to undertake such an office. In many cases the nurse does the cooking. But this is not desirable where it can be avoided, as it takes up time which she can employ to better purpose. Moreover, where the same person makes the requisitions and supplies them, there is neither check nor voucher; and thus the nurse is exposed on the one hand to temptation, and on the other to suspicions, which, however groundless, she has no means of refuting. When the nurse and cooking-place are established, it is time to make the operation of the system generally understood. Either a meeting is called, to which the ministers of religion, medical officers of the district, and others likely to be interested in the cause, are invited, and explanations upon the object and mode of working are publicly given; or such explanations are made privately, by visits or by letter. . . . .

"Every quarter, the Ladies Superintendent of districts draw up a report of their operations for the information of the committee and of each other, and meet to discuss the wants or difficulties which may have arisen. . . . At their annual meeting in 1863 they reported as follows:—'The Lady Superintendents wish to report that the objects of the district nursing have been much more satisfactorily attained during the past year than in 1862. There has been more of actual nursing, and less of mere relief. They believe that its usefulness will be still further increased as more complete co-operation is established with the medical authorities and ministers of religion, and as the plan is better understood. . . . .'

"In consequence of the suggestion above cited, the chairman and secretary of the Central Society invited the medical

men in charge of the dispensaries and parochial districts to meet the Ladies Superintendent. A discussion took place and explanations were given which have led in most districts to cordial and very beneficial co-operation."

The question of the most desirable arrangement with regard to the means by which the necessary funds should be supplied is thus discussed by the writer :—

"There are two dangers to be studiously avoided. On the one hand, half the virtue of the system is lost if the personal character of the work is impaired, if anything should be allowed to lessen the directness of the relation between the giver and the receiver. Much of the value of the district nursing depends on the personal intercourse between the educated, refined, and virtuous woman, who gives of her abundance of means, mind, and heart, and the poor, ignorant, and often erring, whom her bounty relieves and her sympathy soothes ; while she receives in return that peace and enlargement of soul which I believe the rich can hardly obtain, save by taking personal interest in, and care of, their poorer neighbours. Every observant student of human nature must be struck with the amount of mischief caused to both rich and poor by the marked separation between their lives and interests—a separation which the organization of civilized society ever tends to widen more and more. The poor are pauperized and degraded when they receive from the mechanical operation of organized societies that dole into which no feeling of true charity, of Christian brotherhood and personal kindness, enters, to soften the sting of dependence and create a sense of personal affection ; or receive that dole, almost as they receive the parish allowance, with as little thankfulness and as little sense of the duty of enabling themselves speedily to do without it. The rich, on the other hand, who deal with the poor only through such societies, find no relief in this kind of mechanical charity from the narrowness, timidity, and unrest which riches so often create, and which are the natural fruits of hearts and intellects starved and stunted for want of that nourishment and exercise, in personal well-doing and in kind offices to living individuals—not to a class in the abstract—which God intended to counteract the benumbing influences of

wealth. It would, therefore, be very lamentable if the personal tie between the Lady Superintendent and her district should be weakened or superseded by a mechanical organization. On the other hand, the amount of money required to meet the expenses of a district is such that, if it is to be provided by the Lady Superintendent alone, the choice is too narrowly limited by the small number of those who can and will afford such an outlay. And if, by the death or removal of one superintendent, the district organization is for a moment interrupted, its permanence may be endangered by the necessity of finding a successor with suitable qualifications, leisure, and fortune. Perhaps the best way of meeting this difficulty would be by combining personal responsibility with social organization—an individual undertaking the duties of superintendence and providing a certain proportion of the funds, and an organization, charitable or religious, the rest.

"Liverpool had several unconnected societies for almsgiving, whose separate operation led to great abuses. These have been latterly combined into the Central Relief Society. Of the objects of that Society, the relief of the sick poor, now undertaken by the system of district nursing, was one. A more intimate connection between the societies would probably be desirable. The experience of the agents of the Central Relief Society would render material assistance in detecting imposture; while the aid of the district organization would probably enable that Society to use its funds to still greater advantage. If it were arranged that the Central Relief Society should pay one-half the expense of a district, while the Lady Superintendent, representing either a family or a congregation, should pay the remainder, this might probably be found a good method of combining personal care and interest, economy and efficiency, with the adequacy of means and permanence which characterize the working of an organized charity. In other cases church collections might come to the aid of private benevolence, and bear a similar proportion of the cost; or the expense might be defrayed by a large employer of labour, a landowner, or a subscription. Where no such arrangement could be effected, although the loss of the personal superintendence of

an educated and independent woman would be a great drawback, it would still be good economy for the parish to retain the services of a trained district nurse as one of its regular staff."

Such is the history of the Liverpool Institution, and the work undertaken by its different branches: its internal organization, and the nature of its relation to the women whom it employs, will be best shown, as in the preceding instances, by quoting from the pamphlet the Rules of the Institution.

"RULES OF THE LIVERPOOL NURSES' TRAINING SCHOOL, DOVER STREET, LIVERPOOL.

"The Rules of the Society are—

"RULE 1.—That the nurses are to attend the sick, both rich and poor, at hospitals or private houses, as the Committee or Lady Superintendent may appoint.

"RULE 2.—That when sent from the Home to attend a patient, they receive their instructions from the Lady Superintendent, and do not leave the case without communicating with her; this they can do by letter at any time.

"RULE 3.—That no present or gratuity of any kind be accepted by a nurse, beyond some very trifling remembrance from or of the patient.

"RULE 4.—That nothing belonging to a deceased patient is to be accepted by the nurse.

"RULE 5.—That while on duty at the Home, at the Infirmary, or in private houses, the regulations of the establishment with regard to dress are to be observed by the nurse.

"RULE 6.—That no male visitors to the nurses be admitted at the Home without special permission from the Lady Superintendent.

"RULE 7.—That the nurses shall not take more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ pint each of table beer in the twenty-four hours, and no wine or spirits without a medical order; and that they shall carefully avoid adding unnecessarily to the expenses of a household either in board or washing.

"RULE 8.—That a nurse is always to bring back with her a certificate of conduct and efficiency from the family of her patient or from the medical attendant.

"It is expected that the nurses will bear in mind the importance of the situation they have undertaken, and will evince, at all times, the self-denial, forbearance, gentleness, and good temper so essential in their attendance on the sick, and also to their characters as Christian nurses. They are to take the whole charge of the sick-room, doing everything that is requisite in it, when called upon to do so. When nursing in families where there are no servants, if their attention be not of necessity wholly devoted to their patient, they are expected to make themselves generally useful. They are also most earnestly charged to hold sacred the knowledge which, to a certain extent, they must obtain of the private affairs of such households or individuals as they may attend.

"Communications from or on the subject of nurses may be made, personally or by letter, to the Lady Superintendent, Nurses' Home, Dover Street, Liverpool."

"RULES AND FORMS FOR ADMISSION AND TRAINING OF PROBATIONER NURSES.

"*Regulations as to Training Probationer Nurses, at the Liverpool Training School and Home for Nurses.*

"1. The Committee of the Liverpool Nurses' Training School have made arrangements with the authorities of the Royal Infirmary for training women desirous of working as hospital, district, or private sick nurses.

"2. Women desirous of receiving this training should apply to Miss Merryweather, the Lady Superintendent of the Training School; and if they are suitable, and there are vacancies, they will be received into the Home and School as probationers. The age considered desirable for probationers is from 25 to 35. A certificate of age and health, and testimonials of character, according to the forms supplied by the Lady Superintendent, will be required.

"3. The probationers will be under the authority of the Lady Superintendent, and they will be subject to the rules of the Royal Infirmary and the Training School for Nurses.

"4. They will be supplied with board (including tea and sugar), lodging, and washing.

"5. If retained, the wages of a probationer during her year of probation will be 14*l.* 4*s.*, paid thus—2*l.* at the end of the first quarter, 3*l.* 10*s.* at the end of the second quarter, 4*l.* at the end of the third quarter, and 4*l.* 14*s.* at the end of the fourth quarter. The probationers will be required to conform to any regulations in regard to uniformity of outer clothing, and, if supplied with materials for the same by the Institution, the cost (to an extent not exceeding 4*l.* 3*s.*) is to be retained from their wages.

"6. It is expected that at the end of a year they will be fitted for nurses, and their engagement will require them to serve two years more in hospital, district, or private nursing.

"7. At the expiration of three months from the date of entry, every probationer will be required to write a letter to the following effect:—

"'TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE LIVERPOOL NURSES' TRAINING SCHOOL.

"'SIR,—Having now become practically acquainted with the duties required of a nurse, I am satisfied that I shall be able and willing, on the completion of my year's training, to enter into service as a nurse in a hospital, district, or in private houses; and I promise to continue in such service for the space of at least two years, in whatever situations the Committee shall think suitable for my abilities, it being my intention from henceforth to devote myself to nursing the sick.

"'I am, Sir,

"'&c., &c.'

"8. The names of probationers will be entered on a register, in which a record will be kept of their conduct and qualifications. At the end of every month this record will be submitted to the Committee of the Institution.

"9. The probationers will be subject to be discharged at any

time by the Lady Superintendent in case of misconduct, or should she consider them inefficient or negligent in their duties.

"10. The nurse or probationer must be able to read written instructions, and to write.

"11. The nurse or probationer is to keep the apartment allotted to her use neat, clean, and in proper order, and at all times to sweep, dust, and do all that is necessary in the Home, as well as to assist in the needlework there.

"12. The duties of the nurses will be to attend the sick, both rich and poor, at hospitals or private houses, as the Committee or Superintendent may appoint.

"13. All money received for the services of nurses will belong to the Fund of the Training School. No nurse will be permitted to receive any private remuneration in money or clothing. This would defeat the object of the Institution, which is to encourage unselfish and disinterested exertion on the part of the nurse.

"14. The nurses and probationers will be required to attend public worship when at the Home.

"15. All nurses and probationers will be provided with a sufficient allowance of beer and porter to take at meal times; but they will not be allowed to procure or ask for wine or spirits without the express recommendation of a medical man, either at the Home, the Infirmary, or in private houses where they may be nursing; and any infraction of this Rule will subject them to dismissal."

The form to be filled up by probationers refers to the following particulars:—Name, age, place of birth, where educated, previous occupation; whether single, or married, or widow (marriage certificate required); if married or a widow, whether with children, and if so, with how many; references. Applicants are required to fill up this form, to obtain a medical certificate according to a similar form, and to affirm their willingness to conform strictly to the Rules of the Training School.

The regulations for the District Nurses and their Ladies Superintendent are as follows :—

"To Ladies Superintendent.

The following suggestions for organizing a District are necessarily very incomplete : it is to the Ladies Superintendent we must look to work out a more complete system of operations :—

"When a lady becomes the superintendent of a district, a trained nurse will be provided, receiving a salary from the Institution. The Lady Superintendent undertakes to find the medical comforts, and also to provide the nurse with lodgings in a good central situation.

"I. When commencing a district, it may be desirable to call a meeting of the various ministers of religion in the district, to explain to them the objects proposed, give to them the power of recommending cases, requiring, at the same time, that the greatest care should be taken to recommend suitable cases only, excluding such as would be better dealt with in the hospitals or the workhouse, or where the parties are able to help themselves. Want of care in this respect would necessitate the withdrawal of the power of recommendation, as it would involve the waste of means and time. Their kindly aid should be asked in interesting their parishioners and friends in the work, and in bespeaking personal assistance, contributions to the funds of the Institution, or gifts of food, wine, clothes, old linen, &c. The Lady Superintendent will also have to arrange for the custody and preparation of medical comforts. This may be done in various ways :

"1. By the nurse herself merely consulting with the Superintendent. This is not the best way, for obvious reasons.

"2. It has been done by paying a weekly sum for local superintendence and cooking, with the expense of firing, and the extra help necessary to the person who undertakes these duties. A better plan, if possible, is to find in the neighbourhood the kind, intelligent wife of a clerk or shopkeeper, who, for love of the work, would undertake this department of local superintendence.

"II. The Lady Superintendent should either visit herself, or depute some one to visit for her, so as to enable her to satisfy herself that the nurse is working faithfully and sufficiently.

"III. At fixed times, at least once a month, she should examine the nurse's Register, consult with her on fresh cases, and hear the report of former ones. She would find it desirable to keep memoranda of expenditure, and of the articles lent, and to see that they were all marked indelibly, 'Lent, not to be pawned.' The accounts should be kept in her name; and it has been found best to pay all bills monthly. In any case of difficulty or importance, it might be desirable to consult with the person who recommended the case.

"IV. The Lady Superintendent will be provided with—1. A Nurse's Register Book. 2. A map of the district. 3. Forms of Recommendation to be given to those authorized to recommend. 4. Form of application for power to recommend, which must be signed by a minister of religion, medical man, or other party authorized by the Lady Superintendent to recommend. 5. Forms for advising the party signing the recommendation that the case is found unsuitable: the Lady Superintendent will probably find it desirable to fill up this form, and return it, in all such cases. 6. Rules for District Nurses. 7. Rules for patients and their friends. 8. Slates and pencils for nurses.

"V. At certain periods there may be extra pressure on the nurse, and watchfulness must be exercised that her strength is not over-taxed. Additional assistance can generally be found in some woman competent to act under the nurse. This must be done by the district itself, as the Society has not at present extra nurses. It may also be occasionally desirable to employ some strong person to clean out a dwelling. We may mention here that the owner of a house may be compelled, by application to the Inspector of Nuisances, Cornwallis Street, to have it whitewashed when in an unwholesome state.

"VI. The Weekly Register Book of the nurse is required to be taken to the Central Office once a month, and given up to the Society at the end of the year.

"VII. It is impossible here to enter into details; but perhaps even from this sketch it may be gathered that the work is peculiarly susceptible of co-operation—one in which several friends may join, and prevent the burden falling too heavily on any; and all find their own vocation, from the wealthy merchant to the widow with her mite—from the child who gives its untasted orange or its broken toy, to the experienced mother, who, with her kindly presence, brings more substantial aid to the sick little one. Those, too, on whom God has laid His hand, and withdrawn from active life, may have their vocation here. Many are the comforts devised and sent to poorer brethren from the thoughtful bed of sickness, with alleviations and pleasant books to beguile the weary hours of suffering."

"RULES FOR DISTRICT NURSING.

"1. It is expected that each nurse shall devote at least five to six hours a day to visiting the sick poor.

"2. Some cases require to be seen daily, but most not so frequently.

"3. A Weekly Register is to be kept by the nurse, in which each case is to be entered, and the Register taken to the Superintendent of the district at the times fixed by her, and, when required, submitted to the Central Society.

"4. All recommendations of cases to be made by the ministers of religion, or by a medical man or other authorized persons of the district, on a printed form furnished by the Society for that purpose. This recommendation to be taken to the Superintendent on the first opportunity, and to be kept and filed by her.

"5. The nurse to visit all cases so recommended as soon as possible, and report them to and consult the Superintendent upon them at the earliest opportunity. Any difficult point that may arise to be of course submitted to the Superintendent.

"6. The nurse is to report immediately to the Superintendent any case in which she judges that meat or other extra nourishment would restore heads of families more quickly to their work; or which she thinks could be better or more

suitably dealt with in an hospital or workhouse; or where the families visited are able to obtain otherwise for themselves the relief required; or where the neglect or disobedience of the patients or their friends renders her visits useless. No case duly recommended is to be left unattended to, without the knowledge and direct sanction of the Superintendent.

"7. The nurse to be ready and willing to render every assistance in any operation which the surgeon may require.

"8. The nurse to render to the patients under her care such aid and instruction as may be necessary, and to urge upon them the great importance of cleanliness in person and dwelling, of the immediate removal of all things offensive both from the bed and room, and of care to keep the sick-room clean and fresh at all times; of ventilation (fresh air); of giving nourishment and medicine at the right time, as directed; and of strict obedience to the orders of the medical attendant. She will often have to do what is necessary for the patient herself, and in most cases to instruct and enforce her instructions on the relations or attendants. She will tell them when and where to send for nourishment or comforts which are to be supplied to them.

"9. No blankets, sheets, cushions, or other like articles to be lent until fully marked. The articles lent are to be entered by the nurse, with the date of the loan, and a corresponding list given to the responsible person receiving them, requiring that such articles be returned clean and in good order, at such times as the nurse or Superintendent may appoint.

"10. A slate and pencil to be hung up in the patient's room, on which the doctor can write his instructions, and can, if he wishes, make an appointment with the nurse, and on which she can enter any facts or ask any question she may think desirable.

"11. The nurse herself to be an example of neatness, order, cleanliness, and sobriety. She must be most careful to avoid and to discourage any tale-bearing, scandal, or other unprofitable conversation. *She must not interfere with any one's religious opinions. Strict obedience on the part of the nurse to the direction of the medical man is indispensable.*"

The Inspector of Nurses keeps a record of the conduct of each district nurse, under the following heads:—Regularity, reliability, method in work, general ability and insight, personal neatness and cleanliness, tenderness towards patient, sick-cooking, management of patient and family, ventilation and cleanliness in sick-room, ameliorating appliances, working well with medical men, dressings and other appliances under medical direction, management of convalescents, observations on the sick.

In the year 1866 the cholera broke out in Liverpool, as well as in other parts of England. It will be useful for future reference to give here a short account of the way in which the existence of this Institution enabled the authorities of Liverpool to prepare for and to meet the emergency. This account is given in the form of a "Report from the Committee of the Liverpool Training School and Home for Nurses, on the Cholera Outbreak in 1866," which is appended to the ordinary report of the Institution for that year:—

"REPORT ON THE CHOLERA OUTBREAK.

"To the Health Committee of Liverpool, the Select Vestry of Liverpool, the Board of Guardians of Toxteth Park, and the Board of Guardians of West Derby.

"Gentlemen,—Having, to the best of our ability, carried out the work you entrusted to us during the late outbreak of cholera, we think it well to lay before you, in the form of a Report, an account of the matter from the commencement, not only as due to you for the confidence you have placed in us, but also because we believe such a history may be useful in future emergencies. Your medical officers, under whose instruction we have acted throughout, have expressed their opinion that the plans adopted, under your authority, have been most

beneficial alike in saving suffering and life, and have materially contributed, with other measures, in checking the spread of the disease.

"In May 1866, the cholera broke out on board the *Helvetia* (s); the passengers were landed, and the Lady Superintendent of our Institution, Miss Merryweather, was applied to for nurses. The experience gained on that occasion showed us that if an outbreak occurred in Liverpool, before preparation was made, it would be impossible, in the panic which would ensue, to obtain women to act as nurses; and that any aid we might be able to render would be quite inadequate to the necessities of the case. We, therefore, addressed the letter to the Mayor, copy of which will be annexed to this, and, after a preliminary meeting, the following resolution was come to, on the 13th July, at a meeting of representatives of your respective bodies and of our committee :—

"'Resolved by the gentlemen present, that they will recommend to their respective boards—

"'That the Managers of the Nurses' Training Institution be requested to undertake the responsibility of seeking for and investigating applications from fit persons willing to act as cholera nurses, if their services shall be required, and, before engaging any person, of inquiring into their previous history and character; and when they have selected such persons, to place them under the tuition of the trained nurses of the institution, so that they might gain as much experience as possible, and so that the parochial authorities might have an extra available source from which trained nurses could be obtained, if their services should unfortunately be required.

"'That they will also recommend that the expenses which may be incurred in carrying out these objects be paid in the following proportions, viz. :—

"'One-third, by the Corporation, and the remainder by the Parish of Liverpool, the township of West Derby, the township of Toxteth Park, in proportion to the number of the persons in their respective districts within the Borough.'

"Acting under this authority (subsequently confirmed), our officers at once set to work to inquire for suitable women, to

ascertain, as far as possible, their characters and fitness, to accustom them to see disease without panic, and to give them such instruction in nursing as the shortness of time allowed. Our letter to the Mayor of 18th July accepting the task assigned us, copy of which is annexed, explains this.

"The women, as engaged, were placed under the district nurses, or the Infirmary or the Workhouse Hospital nurses, but the cholera came so rapidly that the testing or training was very short and imperfect; some advantage, however, had been gained in collecting the women ready for their work, and they became accustomed, by the example of the nurses, to be fearless about infection when encountered with proper precautions.

"The Central Relief Committee, at our request, kindly set at liberty Mr. Harrison, their visitor, for special cases, whose previous experience as our outdoor inspector and whose devotion to the work have proved of great value. We also secured the services of Miss Howarth, as assistant-inspector, and of Mr. Patterson, to inquire into characters and references, and to assist generally in communicating with the nurses and others.

"The total cost of seeking out, engaging, and employing these women, previous to the respective Boards taking them as cholera nurses, has been £146 7*s.* 4*d.*; of which, according to agreement, £48 15*s.* 9*d.* is due from the Health Committee, £59 5*s.* 10*d.* from the Liverpool Vestry, £14 13*s.* 2*d.* from the Toxteth Park Board of Guardians, and £23 12*s.* 7*d.* from the West Derby Board of Guardians.

"The total number of nurses engaged, from first to last, was 133. The largest number employed at any one time was 120, on 28th September; of this 73 were employed by the Parish of Liverpool, 29 by the Parish of Toxteth Park, and 18 were in preparation and reserve.

"Many of them, while thus waiting till called for by the respective Boards, were most usefully employed under other nurses, on cholera, diarrhœa, and other sick cases.

"CHOLERA HOSPITAL.

"On the 3rd August this was completed. Dr. Gee most wisely (as result proved) forbade nurses to be on duty for more than eight hours at a time. One of the few deaths that occurred among the nurses arose from disregard of this rule. With this restriction, three relays, or six trained nurses, were provided, one to be constantly in charge of each ward, and these were assisted by selections from the women held in reserve, as mentioned above; the number of such women was increased or diminished, from time to time, in proportion to the number of patients, or as directed by Dr. Gee. Everything which was necessary for the most efficient treatment of the sick was supplied liberally and promptly by the Cholera Committee; and from frequent visits of the Lady Superintendent and her sister, of members of our Committee, and from the reports of the medical men, we can speak in the highest terms of the activity, kindness, and devotion of the nurses, and of the freshness and cleanliness of the hospital. Had it not been for the care taken to provide the nurses with frequent nourishment, we believe we should have had to lament many more deaths among them, and we have to thank the Cholera Committee most cordially for the readiness with which they supplied this.

"NURSES ATTACHED TO THE DISPENSARIES TO ATTEND TO CHOLERA PATIENTS IN THEIR OWN HOMES.

"The nurses employed under the Dispensary doctors were engaged in attendance upon cholera patients at their own homes, and such arrangements were made that prompt attention could be given to the cases reported—a matter of the greatest importance.

"The seat of the outbreak of the cholera was principally in the districts in the neighbourhood of Vauxhall-road.

"At first the women who were placed to assist in carrying out the directions of the Parish Dispensary doctors had their headquarters in the house of nursing districts, Nos. 10 and 9B, which was kindly lent by Mrs. Stowell Brown and Mrs. Wood,

whose nurses had previously attended to such cases as occurred, till they became too numerous for them; eventually, however, the upper part of the house occupied by the Burlington-street Dispensary, and subsequently accommodation adjacent to the other dispensaries, was provided by the parish, and Mr. Harrison and Miss Howarth relieved one another, night and day, in the duty of inspection. It was found of very great advantage to have the nurses thus at hand, to take instructions at once from the doctors, who, if a nurse was not at the moment at liberty, wrote the name and address of the patient, and any directions he had to give, on a slip of paper, which he put on a file, and this paper was taken and attended to by the first nurse who came in. Each nurse had a basket, containing 1 bottle turpentine, 1 tin mustard, disinfecting powder and fluid, Liebig's beef-tea and arrowroot, also flannel for fomentation and gloves for rubbing. Blankets also were furnished by the parish when necessary; care was taken that the nurses did not go to their work fasting or weak, food being provided at their quarters. As each relay of nurses came on duty, they reported themselves to the Superintendent, and received a list of cases to attend to, part of which were taken from the reports required to be given in by each relay going off duty, so that no case was lost sight of till the patient was convalescent or dead. The Superintendents visited many of the more difficult cases themselves, and were in constant communication with the medical gentlemen, for whose uniform courtesy and kindness they express themselves most grateful.

"A Register of Nurses and Cases was kept by the Superintendent from 28th July to 25th October, and he sent a daily report to the committee of the names and numbers of nurses employed, cases, visits, deaths, and of any circumstances which occurred of interest. An abstract of this history of the work is sent herewith, and the original, with a register of the names of every nurse employed, her character, residence, if dismissed, why, &c. &c., is open for your perusal, and will be available in case of a fresh outbreak next year.

"When the cases needed it, a note was given to convalescent patients to the Lady Superintendent of the nursing districts in

which they lived, who (assisted in some cases by the Central Relief Society) gave, through the district nurses, food, &c., to assist recovery.

* * * * * *

"We would venture on a few remarks on the experience gained. It is most important that the women intended as cholera nurses should pass the doctor before being engaged, so as to ensure their being equal physically to the severe strain consequent on the employment contemplated. We may mention here that the sickness from which the nurses suffered most was a kind of fever, not dangerous, but, for the time, unfitting them for work. Whether it arose from the bad air in which they were obliged to work, or from tendency to cholera, suppressed by the precautions taken, we are unable to say.

"Of course, among so many women collected together on an emergency, there were many who proved unfit or untrustworthy; but the zeal, kindness, and devotion of the majority of these poor women was most admirable. We regret to say that they were often exposed to rudeness and insult from the drunken relatives of the patients, and the sick often regarded the temporary absence of the nurses with terror, feeling them to be a protection from the drunkenness around them. Even of those women who were unable to resist to the last the temptation of drink, pressed on them when exhausted by their laborious and often-sickening work, many were unsparing of themselves, and most kind to their patients, and did good service before they gave way.

"Some of the cases nursed were so offensive that the nurses had to be changed every two hours. Where the patients would not follow the doctor's orders, the nurse's attendance was useless, and she was withdrawn.

"Drunkenness and want were the principal causes of most of the attacks of cholera; but we must notice the system of waking the dead, as practised by the Irish, as about the most efficient means that could be taken to spread the disease.

"We, in common with the rest of our townsmen, are deeply indebted to the Cholera Committee of the Vestry, the health and medical officers of the Town and Parish of Liverpool and

adjacent districts, for having dealt with cholera in so efficient a manner.

"We have also to record our best thanks to Miss E. Merryweather, Miss Hunt, Miss Tebbut, Miss Howarth, Mrs. Malcolm, Mr. Harrison, and Mr. Patterson, for the efficient way in which they carried out the work entrusted to us; also to Mr. Heath, the Secretary of the Central Relief Society, for the advantage we derived from his experiences of the former outbreak of cholera. We have also to return our best thanks to many of our lady friends for most efficient and laborious assistance, and for liberal donations of clothing.

"In conclusion, may we venture to suggest whether it might not be possible to use, for the cure and to prevent the spread of fever and other diseases, many women whom the parish must support in one form or other.

"Repeatedly, during the past attack of cholera, the Dispensary doctors have expressed the wish to have a continuance of such aid in their usual work. Many of the women employed as cholera nurses had previously been in receipt of parish relief, and we are convinced that the Lady Superintendents of districts would be most happy that the experience and knowledge of our trained district nurses should be available to make the services of such women more efficient and useful for such cases as are under the care of the parochial doctors.

"We are, Gentlemen,

"Your obedient Servants,

"ROBERT HUTCHISON, *Chairman.*
"T. D. HORNBY, *Treasurer.*"

The letter to the Mayor, referred to above, is as follows:—

"LIVERPOOL, *18th July*, 1866.

"THE WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR,

"DEAR SIR,—The Committee of the Nurses' Training School and Home have carefully considered the resolution come to at a meeting of the various authorities of Liverpool, held under your presidency of 13th July.

"In accepting the work they have been asked to undertake, the Committee think it necessary to state exactly the extent to which they can hope to render assistance in providing an extra available source from which trained nurses could be obtained, should their services unfortunately be required.

"They will only be able to supply a few fully trained nurses, taken from the regular work of the society; but they will select, to the best of their abilities, respectable women, and divide the women into the following classes:—

1st.—Those who have already some experience in sick-nursing.

2nd.—Women of intelligence who might soon become capable of aiding these in nursing.

3rd.—Ignorant but strong, active women who might clean, empty for, and wait upon those nursing.

"They propose to place these women—some under the best of our district nurses (say two under each), or some in the Infirmary or Workhouse, under the trained nurses there for some hours a day; some of them might be left with instructions from the trained district nurses to attend on special cases in the districts: this would be some little training for the women.

"The main advantage, however, will be, that we may, to a certain extent, find out what the women are fit for; the time is too short for much training, and the Lady Superintendent expresses the hope that the authorities will not expect too much, but kindly remember that as there will probably be little time, even to prove the capabilities of fresh workers, we must fully expect many failures, both as regards nursing and character. We enclose the form of engagement we propose to take from the women.

"We understand that we have authority to commence our work at once, and that the cost to us in wages, expenses, and superintendence will be reimbursed to us by the public bodies represented at the meeting of the 13th July.

"I have the honour to be,

"Dear Sir, your faithful Servant,

(Signed) "ROBERT HUTCHISON, *Chairman.*

"FORM OF ENGAGEMENT.

"LIVERPOOL, 186

"MADAM,—In consideration of the sum of paid to me by you in advance for the first week's work, and continuance of such wages while under trial, I hereby engage whenever called upon by you, at such wages as the Health Committee of Liverpool, or the Select Vestry of Liverpool, or the West Derby or Toxteth Park Parochial Boards may decide, to become and act as nurse or attendant in the case of cholera patients, either in hospital or in their own homes, as may be required, for as long during the year 186 as you may require; and I engage to be sober, honest, faithful, and obedient to the medical men, head nurses, or any others who may be placed by you in authority over me.

"I am, Madam,

"Your obedient Servant,

"—————."

In order to show as fully as possible what is the spirit in which this work is regarded and carried on by its founders, I will give in conclusion some further extracts from the pamphlet already quoted. Speaking of the question whether "a religious organization" is necessary to the success of such an undertaking, the writer says: "A religious organization, in the best sense of the phrase, I trust that we possess; but what is too often meant by the words is a dogmatic or sectarian bond. This I believe to be neither necessary nor desirable. The Lady Superintendent of the Home and Training School has always endeavoured to instil religious motives and a religious sense of professional duty into the minds of her pupils; and though among these are members of many different sects, we are never troubled with religious discord. Good work, faithfully performed, has a tendency to enlarge the mind of a Christian, and purify his spirit from sectarian bigotry, to bring into strong relief those principles of faith and practice which, as the great Judge has assured us, will guide His judgment, and to indispose the labourers to 'judge' one another. . . . . .

"In the Appendix will be found an address delivered to the nurses by one of the Committee, on the first New Year's entertainment in the Home. In its sentiments I believe that 'all who profess and call themselves Christians' could cordially

unite. In working among the poor, we cannot be too careful to avoid the suspicion of any latent or subsequent purpose—any object other than that openly professed, which, in the present case, is that of curing the sick, alleviating their sufferings, and teaching them the rules of health. In this as in most things, 'singleness of eye' is necessary to success. If the poor suspect that a benefactor seeks to gain them over to any sect, or induce them to attend any particular church, they at once set down his kindness to selfish and insidious motives, and are neither grateful nor edified. Of course this feeling on their part is exaggerated and unreasonable; for even their conversion is desired as tending to their own happiness. But such is their feeling; and, since it is so, we cannot too carefully avoid any indication of sectarianism and proselytism. Of course, in proportion as this and our other duties are well performed, will be the influence of our example, and the disposition of the poor among whom we work to respect and adhere to the faith that bears such fruits; but to desire or seek for any more direct results of this kind in the work of healing or relieving the sick is to ensure disappointment, and is certainly to depart widely from the practice of our Master."

The address above referred to is as follows:—

"For the first time the New Year finds our family gathered together in a Home of our own, under the kind and motherly care of its valued head.

"We hope that you have found your Home cheerful, comfortable, and convenient. We have spared no trouble to make it so; for we have felt that your work, if thoroughly and heartily done, must often be anxious and trying, and we are desirous that, when it is over, you should return to a cheerful, comfortable Home. Moreover, we require from you, that whether you work in the Hospital, in private families, or among the poor, you should be models of cleanliness and neatness; that when you go into the house of the poor to nurse them—and all of you are bound to go there if sent, and I trust will ever consider it the noblest and best part of your work,—when you go there, we trust that you will enforce cleanliness, ventilation, and all those rules of health the observance of which might

make their homes so different from what they are—might not only materially promote health, but often prevent the poor man from being driven to the public-house, as a refuge from a place more fitted for a pigsty than a human dwelling. By giving you every facility for order and cleanliness here, we trust to strengthen your love for them.

"In the Lady Superintendent you have one in whom you will ever find a most kind guardian and friend, if you seek to do your duty. She left a position in which she had the promise of all which would seem most likely to gratify her tastes and feelings, and friends who were most anxious to keep her; she left it and them because she felt that here she was likely to be even more useful, and that therefore here her Lord and Master willed that she should be. If you feel, as she is most anxious you should, that you are members of a family, you will be ever desirous that the character of that family should be as high as possible—that it should be a credit to belong to it; that no act or word of yours should bring shame upon it; but, on the contrary, each of you will strive, by the gentleness, quietness, modesty, and truthfulness of your conduct, by constantly increasing proficiency in your profession, and by the thoroughness and conscientiousness of your work, continually to raise the character of the School, and of all belonging to it, higher and higher.

"The character and position of sick-nurses has not been always what it should be, or might be, because neither the nurses themselves nor others considered how much depended on, how much might be done by, the nurse.

"Miss Nightingale has shown the world its error; it remains with the nurses themselves to do the rest. I hope we shall all work heartily to do our part. But here I must give you one caution: we must beware lest a proper respect for our profession should degenerate into a cloak for a wretched pride. There is no pride so mean, so contemptible, as that which makes a person above her work. There is nothing really mean, or degrading, or unclean, which our duty calls us to do; but if ever pride leads us to leave part of our duty or work undone or ill done, then indeed we are degraded. But, after all, gratitude for what has been done, or the care and affection of

your Lady Superintendent, or pride in and fondness for your profession and your work, may help you to do well; but they are motives which, unaided, cannot make you what you ought to be as nurses,—cannot make your work all it ought to be.

"There is work, there will be times, for which all motives are too weak but one: you can only do your work as it ought to be done if you do it as servants, as brethren, of our Lord Jesus Christ. His eye will be ever upon you; His hand ever near you; His example should be ever before you. If you are merely hirelings, working for man's wages or man's praise, there will be much of your work that will be distasteful, wearisome, heartless; if all your work is done as in His sight, and for His sake and God's, how different will all appear! Your work lies, as much of His did, among the sick, and suffering, and dying; if you do it as feeling yourselves fellow-workers with Him, it is impossible to say—you will never know, no one can ever know—how much good you may accomplish. Your patients may be irritable and ungrateful; but if they see that, patiently and constantly, and when no master's eye but God's sees you, you go quietly on with your duty, neither discouraged nor weary in well-doing, you may be sure you are sowing good seed, which will not be lost, for Almighty power is working with you. The long hours of sickness, the pain, and the danger often cause things to be remembered and thought of, which in the hurry of life and health would be forgotten.

"Not only the life of your patients may depend on your faithfulness to duty, but by it you may also influence for good their virtue and happiness here and hereafter. Remember, when wearied and perhaps discouraged by ingratitude, it is not alone the poor, wretched, irritable, and, perhaps it may seem to you, worthless sufferer you are serving—'Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, ye did it unto Me.' By his suffering which you can alleviate, the object of your care becomes to you the representative of Him who died for you. Think of this, and your task will become a grateful one, your labour one of love.

"The choice is before you. Will you be mere hirelings; or will you be respected members of a happy family on earth, and a still happier family hereafter?"

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE POSITION OCCUPIED BY CHARITABLE SISTERHOODS IN FRANCE.

THE question whether it is desirable to establish a system of religious sisterhoods for charitable purposes is one in which any appeal which can be made to actual experience must obviously be of great importance. It is to France that we most naturally turn in order to study the results of such experience, for there the system has existed in full vigour from the earliest times in which we have any history of charitable institutions, and the necessary information is there most easily accessible. It has accordingly been the fashion with advocates of sisterhoods to bring forward the good management of French hospitals and other charities, with their regular staff of Sisters of Charity, as an argument for promoting the growth of sisterhoods among ourselves. The question of the comparative merits of French and English hospitals is one upon which I shall not venture to offer an opinion. Competent judges on both sides of the Channel are far from being unanimous in this matter. It is obvious, however, that in attempting to apply to our own case the results of French experience, we must bear in mind how different is the charitable organization of which religious orders form a part in that country, from anything which exists in England. The "Sisters," with whose appearance in French hospitals, schools, and streets we are so familiar, form part of a vast system, both official and ecclesiastical, the rest of which, whatever may be its merits or demerits, we are certainly very unlikely at present to borrow from our neighbours. In order to judge fairly how far it would be possible or desirable to copy this particular part of it, we should have to ascertain not only how it works, but how it is connected with the rest of the

system, and how that system differs from our own. Without attempting fully to carry out so extensive an inquiry, I propose in this chapter to state some of the differences between France and England, or rather between Paris and London, especially as regards the provision for nursing the sick, which will indicate the qualified sense in which the experience of the one country can be considered as applicable to the other.[1]

In attempting to make any such comparison we are met at the outset by two great sources of confusion. One of these consists in the absence of any uniformity of system which characterizes all our own charitable institutions, and in particular the great diversity of character among our hospitals. No two probably are precisely alike in their internal arrangements, and the same offices are sometimes described by different names in different institutions. It is therefore difficult to compare one English hospital with another, and still more difficult to make any general statements respecting them with sufficient accuracy to serve as a ground of comparison with the system which is common to all the hospitals of Paris. This difficulty is increased by the scantiness of the reports published by most of our hospitals, which, as every one knows, consist chiefly of subscription lists, and, of course, do not enter into any comparisons between their own arrangements and those of other institutions. It is, however, in some degree met for my purposes by a report published in 1862 by MM. Blondel and Ser,[2] the principal inspector and the engineer of the "Assistance publique." A discussion having arisen in the "Académie de Médecine" of Paris respecting the relative merits of French and English hospitals, the present Director of Public Assistance, M. Armand Husson, sent these two gentlemen to visit

[1] The following account having been written before the present war, it is at present impossible to say how much of it may have been rendered obsolete as a statement of existing facts by the changes which have since taken place; but whatever interest may belong to it as a study of the working of religious sisterhoods in connection with public charities is, of course, untouched by those changes. (January 1871.)

[2] Rapport sur les Hôpitaux Civils de la Ville de Londres : au point de vue de la Comparaison de ces Établissements avec les Hôpitaux de la Ville de Paris. Par M. Blondel, Inspecteur principal, et M. L. Ser, Ingénieur, de l'Administration de l'Assistance publique. Paris, 1862.

the hospitals and other charitable institutions of a corresponding kind in London, with a view to obtaining information upon the questions in dispute. Their report gives a great deal of information upon the points of comparison, which is condensed in a report upon their work[1] presented to the Academy by M. Husson.

The second source of confusion to which I refer is the fact that the things to be compared do not, in fact, correspond with any exactness. Not only are the institutions and their inmates very different in character in the two countries, but there is also a difference between the French and English methods of distribution of inmates among the various institutions which are in other respects most analogous, and between which alone any comparison can be made. The population of a French hospital is not drawn from exactly the same social level as that from which our English hospitals are filled, nor are the hospitals supported by quite corresponding classes in the two countries. M. Husson has pointed out, in his report upon the work of MM. Blondel and Ser just mentioned, that the great difference between the practice of the two countries is, that in France the sick are considered as the charge of the State, which maintains all the principal hospitals, while the old and infirm are chiefly cared for by private charity; with us, on the other hand, legal provision is made for the support of the old and infirm, while hospitals and dispensaries for the sick poor are supported chiefly by private charity. The hospitals in Paris, being public institutions, are open to all classes, the admission of patients depending merely upon the opinion pronounced by the medical authorities upon the urgency of the case; and when once admitted, they are provided with everything they want—not only with food and medicine, but with linen and a hospital uniform, their own clothes being, if necessary, cleaned and repaired during their stay in the hospital and returned to them on leaving. In some cases, also, the children of patients are received into the asylum for "Enfants assistés" during the period required for the parents' treatment in the hospitals.

[1] Rapport sur un Ouvrage de MM. Blondel et Ser. Extrait du Compte rendu de l'Académie des Sciences morales et politiques.

While the very poorest are thus supplied gratuitously with all they want, however, some payment is regularly required from those patients who can afford it. In most of the London hospitals, on the other hand, there is a rule requiring a recommendation from a subscriber as a condition of admission, although this may be dispensed with in urgent cases; in many hospitals all the patients are required to provide some part of their own diet (generally tea and sugar), to bring a change of linen, and to pay for their own washing. The effect of these regulations is, of course, more or less, to exclude the very lowest class; so that the population of a London hospital is of a somewhat higher grade than that of the public hospitals in Paris, which in fact correspond, as to the nature of their population, not exactly with hospitals in London, but with hospitals and workhouse infirmaries combined. The infirmaries in the "Hospices généraux" and other asylums for the destitute and infirm are intended only for the treatment of the inmates when ill, not for the reception of destitute patients like those who are admitted into our workhouse infirmaries.

These sources of confusion, though they destroy the exactness of any possible comparison, yet afford a strong instance of that which my comparison is intended to show; namely, the difficulty of judging what would be the effect of borrowing any single part of a system which differs from our own in a manner not only so essential but so complicated. For this and other reasons, I shall not attempt to set the two systems side by side; it will be sufficient for my purpose to describe some of the principal features of the French system, with occasional reference to our own institutions. The principal sources from which I shall take this description are M. Husson's work on hospitals,[1] and that of his predecessor in the office of Director of Public Assistance, M. Davenne, upon the "Secours publics en France."[2] I must take this opportunity of expressing my grateful sense of M. Husson's kindness, not only in giving me every facility for collecting information respecting the Paris

[1] Études sur les Hôpitaux. Par M. Armand Husson, Directeur-Général de l'Assistance publique. Paris: Paul Dupont, 1862.

[2] De l'Organisation et du Régime des Secours publics en France. Par H. J. B. Davenne. Paris: Paul Dupont, 1865.

hospitals on the spot, but in the still more valuable form of personal communications and encouragement in my undertaking.

It is well known that all the public hospitals of Paris, and the system of public relief which there corresponds to that administered by our own Poor-law, are under the control and direction of a central office, called the "Administration de l'Assistance Publique." But this arrangement is of recent date, and is peculiar to Paris. In the provinces, the hospitals and the "bureaux de bienfaisance" are managed by local boards, called "commissions administratives," the members of which, though nominated by the Prefects and subject to the authority of the Minister of the Interior, are not placed under the control of any central office. I have not attempted to make any inquiry into the management of the French provincial hospitals or other institutions. For every reason it seemed best to confine the comparison to Paris and London, and to occupy myself especially, though not quite exclusively, with the general hospitals of these two cities.

Before the Revolution of 1789, the Paris hospitals, of which the Hôtel-Dieu was by far the oldest and the most important, were quite independent of each other and of the "bureaux de charité." The hospitals were from the earliest times not only served by religious orders, but governed by ecclesiastical superiors. M. Husson[1] gives full accounts of the great abuses which were discovered in the Hôtel-Dieu and other hospitals early in the 16th century, and quotes a decree of the Parliament of the year 1505 for its reformation, the means proposed for which are the separation of the spiritual from the temporal management of the hospital and the appointment of lay commissioners for the administration of its temporal affairs. Many similar measures followed, until, as M. Davenne tells us, "C'est à la suite de divers édits, renouvelés plusieurs fois sans succès dans le cours des XVe et XVIe siècles, que, par celui du 24 Octobre, 1612, l'administration des établissements hospitaliers fut définitivement retirée au clergé et remise aux mains séculières." (Secours publics, p. 231.) The actual nursing, however,

[1] Études sur les Hôpitaux.

has always remained in the hands of the religious orders, many of which have been instituted for this very purpose.

At the time of the Revolution, the revenues of the hospitals and of the "bureaux de charité," and all other charitable institutions, were declared to be public property; and the "commissions administratives,"[1] which are still the governing bodies of the provincial establishments, were created for the management of all the "établissements de bienfaisance." At Paris, in the year 1801, a "Conseil général des Hospices" was established, by which, with the assistance of a "commission administrative," all the hospitals and hospices of that city were to be governed. In the same year the "secours à domicile," or administration of relief, in Paris, was put into the hands of the same council. Its successor, the present office of the "Assistance publique," was instituted by a law dated 10th of January, 1849, on the recommendation of a special commission. By this law all the powers of the old "Conseil général des Hospices" and of the "Commission administrative" were placed in the hands of the head of the office, who is called the "Directeur de l'Administration générale de l'Assistance publique." He is appointed by the Minister of the Interior, upon the recommendation of the Prefect of the Seine. Subject to their authority, and to that of a "Conseil de Surveillance," he exercises absolute authority over all the "services" which are placed under his control, and over all the officials employed in any of them. He is the legal representative of all the institutions under his direction, and guardian of the "enfants trouvés, abandonnés et orphelins," and of the insane. He has a permanent seat in the council of superintendence, which meets once a fortnight, under the presidency of the Prefect of the Seine.[2]

[1] These commissions are composed of five members appointed by the "préfet;" the "maire" is *ex-officio* president. They meet once a fortnight, and each member in rotation is entrusted, for a fixed period, with the daily superintendence of the establishments under the management of the commission.

[2] This council is composed as follows:—

"Le Préfet de la Seine, président; le préfet de police; deux membres du conseil municipal; deux maires ou adjoints; deux administrateurs des comités d'assistance des arrondissements municipaux; un conseiller d'état ou un maître des requêtes au Conseil d'état; un membre de la Cour de

The present Director-General, M. Armand Husson, in his work upon hospitals, gives (9th Appendix, p. 548) a complete list of the establishments of which the Director-General has the management, with their objects, number of inmates, and staff of officials or attendants. The establishments are as follows:—

1. The "Administration centrale," or office where all the business of the "Assistance publique" is carried on. Attached to this central office are fifty-seven visitors.

2. "Bureau Central d'Admission," where patients wishing to be admitted into the hospitals must, as a rule, apply in the first instance, although cases of accident and other very urgent cases are admitted, without this preliminary, at the nearest hospital. This office is in daily communication with all the hospitals, and receives from each of them information of the number of beds occupied, &c., and from it applicants who are judged fit for admission are distributed among the hospitals, according to the information thus received. At this office out-patients also receive gratuitous advice and treatment, and bandages and other surgical appliances are distributed to the poor. The patients whose cases are the most urgent are sent at once to the hospital thus chosen for them. Those whose cases are comparatively slight are sent home, with a supply of medicines, &c., for immediate use, and visited by one of the visitors employed by the "Assistance publique," who investigates their circumstances, and decides whether, if admitted to a hospital, they should be required to make any payment, and in that case fixes the sum to be required from them.

3. Eight[1] general and ten special hospitals. The "special" hospitals are intended either for the treatment of particular diseases or of a particular class of patients; they include two children's hospitals in Paris, and two sea-side hospitals for children suffering from scrofulous affections, and the "Maison

Cassation; un médecin des hôpitaux et hospices, en exercice; un chirurgien des hôpitaux et hospices, en exercice; un professeur de la faculté de médecine; un membre de la Chambre de Commerce; un membre d'un des conseils de prud'hommes; cinq membres pris en dehors des catégories indiquées ci-dessus."—Law of the 24th April, 1849. De Watteville's "Législation Charitable," p. 108.

[1] A new general hospital of 600 beds is or was about to be built at Ménilmontant.

municipale de Santé," for the reception of patients who are able to pay for their treatment, the terms varying, according to the accommodation required, from 4 to 12 francs a day.

4. Five "hospices,"—namely, the Bicêtre and Salpêtrière asylums, for aged men and women, respectively; two hospitals for incurables, one for men and one for women; and the "Enfants assistés" (formerly called the "Enfants trouvés"), where foundlings, abandoned children, and children whose parents are in hospitals (under certain conditions) are received, and from whence they are distributed to the care of nurses in different parts of the country.

5. Three "Maisons de Retraite," or alms-houses.

6. Four "Hospices fondés," or endowed asylums for the aged and infirm.

7. Six "Établissements de Service général," for the supply of provisions and medical stores to the other institutions: these are the "boulangerie centrale, cave centrale, boucherie centrale, pharmacie centrale, amphithéâtre d'anatomie, et service d'approvisionnement."

8. Two institutions for giving assistance to the poor at their own homes, called the Fondation Montyon and the Filature des Indigents. The first of these is a fund left to the administration by M. de Montyon, from which assistance is given to convalescents on their return home from the hospitals; the second is an "Établissement de Service général," for providing the linen and other articles of clothing, &c., required for the use of the hospitals. Part of these are bought in the ordinary way of business; part of the work is given out, by way of charity, to poor women at their own homes or in the "hospices:" some of the inmates of the Salpêtrière are thus enabled to earn a little money.

9. "Bureaux de Bienfaisance," of which there is one in each of the twenty "arrondissements" of Paris. "Chaque bureau," says M. Husson (p. 556), "se compose (1°) du maire de l'arrondissement, président-né; (2°) des adjoints, membres-nés; (3°) de douze administrateurs; (4°) d'un nombre illimité de commissaires de bienfaisance et de dames de charité; (5°) d'un secrétaire-trésorier.

"Il est attaché à chaque bureau des médecins et chirurgiens, des sages femmes, des sœurs de charité, et des employés de divers grades, en nombre proportionné aux besoins du service. Les bureaux de bienfaisance désignent chaque année, dans leur sein, par la voie du scrutin, un vice-président, un secrétaire honoraire, un ordonnateur et un délégué."

The "Secrétariat du Bureau" is almost always at the "Mairie." In each arrondissement there are from one to four "maisons de secours;" there were, in 1867, fifty-seven of these houses. These "maisons de secours" are served by Sisters, the number of whom in each house varied in 1862 from one to eight.

10. The "Direction des Nourrices," an establishment the object of which is to mediate between the parents of new-born children and the nurses who come to Paris from the country to offer their services. This office is charged with the superintendence of children born in the hospitals, on whose account special assistance is granted, "à titre d'encouragement" to those mothers who consent to keep their children themselves.

11. "Services extérieurs." There were in 1862 twenty-five "arrondissements" in the country, in which 21,487 of the "enfants assistés" were distributed, and seven "arrondissements" in which 2,027 children were placed by the "Direction des Nourrices:" an official inspector is employed in each of these districts.

All these institutions are supported at the public expense. M. Husson gives tables taken from the budget of 1862 (Études, Appendix 8, p. 527, &c.), by which it appears that the ordinary expenses of the administration for that year were upwards of twenty-two million francs. These expenses are defrayed partly by the revenues belonging to the administration, partly by a "subvention municipale," levied upon the octroi. The revenues belonging to the administration, which amount to scarcely one-half of its expenses, consist of the income arising from endowments and benefactions, of the returns from institutions in which the inmates make some payment, and of rights granted by the law. These rights are certain dues upon theatrical performances and other "spectacles," upon burial-grounds, and upon the Monts de Piété.

"Certes," says M. Husson, "nous n'avons rien à regretter des privilèges souvent exorbitants dont jouissaient autrefois les hôpitaux, puisque, sous l'empire de la législation moderne, qui a fait rentrer les administrations hospitalières dans le droit commun, une subvention, prélevée sur les produits de l'octroi, supplée aux ressources que l'administration a perdues. Mais cette subvention, ne se réglant jamais que sur le découvert du budget, qu'elle a pour but d'équilibrer, ne lui permet plus, comme autrefois, de faire profiter la fortune hospitalière de la gestion intelligente de ses biens; souvent, au contraire, obligée de pourvoir à des besoins extraordinaires ou à des constructions nouvelles, elle a dû aliéner une partie de sa dotation immobilière ou de ses capitaux, réduits aujourd'hui à moins de moitié de ce qu'ils étaient au moment de la Révolution.

"L'ancien patrimoine des pauvres, fondé en partie par la charité privée, s'alimente bien encore à cette source féconde: chaque année l'administration enregistre des donations et des legs; mais cette ressource n'a plus la même importance qu'autrefois. Non-seulement elle suit les fluctuations de la prospérité publique; mais, comme la fortune, qui, en France, se morcelle tous les jours davantage, elle se subdivise sans cesse, et s'éparpille, si l'on peut s'exprimer ainsi, sur une multitude d'œuvres et de spécialités diverses.

"Et en effet, dans le nombre des libéralités que notre administration recueille chaque année, les plus considérables comme les plus modestes, ayant presque toutes une affectation spéciale, sont destinées à créer des services ou des moyens nouveaux, et n'apportent le plus souvent qu'un soulagement de peu d'importance aux charges incessamment croissantes qui pèsent sur elle.

"Aussi l'administration, tous les jours un peu moins riche par l'augmentation même de ses besoins, se voit-elle, en présence du découvert de ses budgets, dans la nécessité de réclamer chaque année des subventions plus fortes, malgré le soin qu'elle apporte à restreindre ses dépenses dans les limites les plus modérées."

M. Davenne considers that the obligation of the municipality thus to contribute whatever may be necessary to balance the

excess of expenditure over income of the administration, is rather moral than legal, although the law, as early as the year 1798, made provision for its fulfilment by the re-establishment of the octrois which had been abolished in 1791.

The mere enumeration of all the institutions which are thus administered in Paris by one central office upon uniform principles, and at the expense of a common fund, is sufficient to show one great difference between the position of charitable religious orders there and any place which they could occupy in London. The authority of the Director-General over every individual employed in any one of these institutions is absolute, and is delegated in each hospital or "hospice" to a local director, who represents him in that particular establishment, and is bound to furnish him with a daily report of all that takes place in it. These directors receive salaries of from 2,700 fr. to 6,500 fr. per annum, besides lodging, lighting and firing, the rank of "chefs de bureaux," and a retiring pension after 30 years service amounting to half their salary. They appear to be men of such position, experience, and ability as thoroughly qualify them to carry out and enforce the instructions of the Director-General. This form of government, whatever its other advantages or disadvantages, certainly provides a degree of control over the religious orders employed in the hospitals to which there would be no counterpart in one of our London committees, and which I have reason to think is considered by competent judges in Paris as absolutely necessary in dealing with the "Sisters," who, being subject to their own religious superiors, and bound by their own rules, will never co-operate with the secular administration with the heartiness which may be expected from secular subordinates. An extract from the work already quoted of M. Davenne, who is certainly very friendly to Sisterhoods, shows that this difficulty is strongly felt in some cases even by the French administration. Speaking of the orders by which the different institutions are served, he says (vol. i. p. 268, note) :—

"Quant aux hospices de la Salpêtrière et de Bicêtre, l'obstacle qui s'y oppose à ce que le service y soit remis à des religieuses est dans la nombreuse population et l'étendue même de ces

vastes établissements, où l'autorité, dont le ressort tend à s'affaiblir précisément en raison de sa trop grande extension, a d'autant plus besoin, pour être ponctuellement obéïe, d'exercer une action prompte et directe sur ses agents à tous les degrés; tandis que les sœurs, à quelqu'ordre qu'elles appartiennent, dépendant de supérieurs placés en dehors de l'administration, n'offriraient pas, sous ce rapport, les garanties qu'elle est en droit d'exiger, et dont le soin de sa responsabilité lui commande de ne pas se dessaisir."

The position occupied by the Sisterhoods in the hospitals is defined partly by custom and partly by the treaties passed between the administration and the superiors of each order. Similar treaties regulate their rights and duties in the "maisons de secours," the schools, and other institutions in which they are employed. Before giving the terms of the agreement between the religious orders and the administration, I must describe the nature of their work in the hospitals, and the general result of such inquiries as I have been able to make as to the manner in which it is performed.

The eight general hospitals of Paris are served by the following sisterhoods:—

L'Hôtel Dieu, la Charité, and Lariboisière, by the Sœurs de St. Augustin, whose "maison mère" is in the Hôtel Dieu. This order is cloistered, their rule forbidding them to leave the hospitals which they serve. In case of necessity, they go from place to place in a close carriage, not fewer than four together.

Beaujon, La Pitié, and St. Antoine, by the Sœurs de Ste. Marthe, one of the oldest of the "ordres hospitaliers," and one in which there is great comparative freedom. Their "maison mère" is the Hospital of St. Antoine. The members of these two orders are generally said to be the best hospital nurses in Paris: the facts that their principal work is nursing, and that their novitiate is passed in a hospital, probably account for this.[1]

Necker, by the Filles de St. Vincent de Paule—the order which I have fully described in Chapter IV. Their "maison mère" is in the Rue du Bac. Their skill in nursing is said to be decidedly inferior to that of the two preceding orders.

[1] See Miss Nightingale's "Notes on Hospitals," Appendix.

There is no hospital or opportunity for training in nursing at the "maison mère."

Cochin, by the Sœurs de Ste. Marie.

There is in each hospital a local superior, who is responsible for the maintenance of order in the wards, for the proper execution of the directions given by the medical staff, for the distribution of clothes, linen, food, and medicine to the patients; she and her Sisters have the charge of the kitchen, the laundry (where there is one), the "lingerie," &c., and the superintendence of the paid nurses, male and female, and other servants employed in the wards. They occupy, in short, as nearly as possible the same position as that of our head nurses, or "Sisters." Under each Sister are placed one or more "infirmiers" and "infirmières"—as a rule never less than one of each sex. These paid nurses correspond to the under-nurses in an English hospital. They are engaged and paid by the administration, with the consent, and generally upon the recommendation, of the superior, and are placed by it under the authority of the Sisters; so that, for instance, a servant would always be dismissed upon the request of the superior. They receive from 180 to 252 fr. a year (the maximum of 252 being reached, in case of good conduct, by four annual augmentations of 18 fr.), and clothing; and after fifteen years of service, or when completely disabled by wounds or accidents received in the service, they are entitled to a pension, or to what is called "repos en nature," that is, board, lodging, firing, lighting, and clothing, with a small allowance in money, varying from 10 to 30 fr. a year.

This appears to me to be the weakest part of the French system. The pay is very low as compared with that of domestic servants, which in the case of a general servant is I am told usually about 30 fr. a month (without clothing or pension, of course); and the difficulty of getting respectable people to fill this position seems to be greater even than that which is found in getting trustworthy under-nurses in English hospitals. Complaints of their want of sobriety and morality are universal, and no attempt can be made to give them any kind of special training. The rules forbidding nurses to receive fees from the patients are as strict as in our own hospitals, but appear to

be in the case of the paid nurses equally generally disregarded. It is of course impossible to ascertain the exact value of such complaints; but it is obvious that the arrangement is one under which it is scarcely possible that there should not be considerable ground for them. The Sisters cannot have complete authority over the paid nurses, who are neither their servants nor members of the same body; nor are the Sisters made responsible for their welfare. The numerical importance of this body appears from the accompanying Table I., which, at my request, M. Husson was kind enough to have filled up for me, the object being to ascertain what proportion of the work in the hospitals could be performed by the Sisters themselves. The table shows the exact number of men and women employed in the wards, and in household work, the number of sisters, of medical officers and students, of wards, and of beds, in each of the eight general hospitals. I have endeavoured to construct a similar table for the eleven principal London hospitals, and I have to thank the secretaries and other officials of those institutions for the kindness with which they have given me all the information I desired. In collecting the information given in Table II., I found that the internal arrangements with respect to medical officers and pupils varied so much from hospital to hospital, and even in some cases from time to time, that I have thought it best to omit those two columns altogether. For a similar reason, most of the other columns must be regarded as giving only approximate results. It will be observed that we have scarcely any male nurses in our hospitals, which some of those best qualified to judge consider as matter of regret.

It is, of course, extremely difficult for any one, and impossible without long and intimate observation of the hospitals of both countries, to compare the merits of French and English nurses, or the degree in which, in either city, the physical and moral well-being of the patients is assured. The result of the inquiries I have been able to make in the matter, however, have convinced me that there is no such incontestable superiority on either side as is sometimes assumed. Even if it were so, the question whether the presence of religious orders in the

TABLE I.

Établissements.	Salles.	Lits.	Sœurs.	Filles de Service.		Garcons de Service.		Médecins.	Élèves.
				Dans les Salles.	Pour le Ménage.	Dans les Salles.	Pour le Ménage.		
Hôtel-Dieu	26	834	24	40	14	48	21	11	62
Pitié	24	633	23	29	9	36	13	8	45
Charité	17	425	18	22	9	24	14	8	33
St. Antoine	22	600	21	32	5	30	15	8	48
Necker	15	445	20	12	5	19	12	6	34
Cochin	9	193	17	16	6	4	8		13
Beaujon	26	416	19	19	3	20	9		38
Lariboisière	18	634	26	30	12	27	22	8	52

Nov. 1868.

TABLE II.

Hospitals.	Wards.	Beds.	Sisters, or Head Nurses.	Under Nurses.	Women Servants.	Men Nurses.	Men Servants.
Charing Cross	12	130	2	18	4 i.e. hospital 2, nurses' home 2	Occasional	4
Guy's	22	560	20	72	21	None	14
King's College	13	152	7	13	6, and 12 scrubbers	Occasional	6
London	47	570	14 head nurses, 1 night supt.	47 asst. nurses 23 night ditto — 70	20 servants 6 reg. scrubrs, 38 extra ditto	2 or 3 as required	22
Middlesex	20	300	9	42	9	Occasional	12 (including 2 dispensers)
St. Bartholomew's	26	620	25	81	3, about 30 scrubbers	None	21
St. George's	20 in present hospital (new wing, 4)	331 now; new wing, 48	16, and 2 supernumeraries; 1 night supt.	22 asst. nurses 14 night ditto — 36	4	None	8
St. Mary's	18	157	7	11 asst. nurses 7 night ditto — 18	5 (scrubbers not included)	None	6
St. Thomas's	Tem. Hospital, 5; and a casualty-house for 4 special cases.	211	7	9 day nurses 10 night ditto	5 (hospital) 2 (nurses) 1 crubbers	None	16
University	22	150	7	24	4 (scrubbers not included)	Occasional	9 day porters
Westminster	18	193	6	17	4, and 4 scrubbers	None	7

1869.

French hospitals was advantageous or otherwise would not thereby be decided. For it is very difficult to disentangle the effects produced by this circumstance from those due to other causes, which vary in the two systems, such as construction, internal arrangement, and administration. MM. Blondel and Ser give a decided though not unqualified preference to the French hospitals on most of these latter points; but the result of their observations upon the "personnel" of the English hospitals is thus summed up by M. Husson in his report upon their work: "Mais il faut bien le dire, à Londres la tenue des salles est parfaite; tout y respire l'ordre, le calme, et la propreté. Les nôtres les égalent à ce dernier point de vue; mais il paraît malheureusement certain que si notre personnel de religieuses placées à la tête de nos salles ne le cède en rien aux sœurs anglaises (sisters), leurs infirmières (nurses) auxquelles est confié le soin des malades, même dans les services consacrés aux hommes, l'emportent de beaucoup sur les gens de service des deux sexes que nous employons."

It will be seen, on referring to the number of paid nurses employed in the French hospitals, that a large part of the actual work of nursing must be performed by them, the business of the Sisters being in great measure that of superintendence. In this respect the division of labour between the "Sœurs" and the "infirmiers" or "infirmières" is just the same as that between our Sisters and assistant nurses. But there are some circumstances, arising from the constitution of the religious orders, which throw a greater share of responsibility upon the French paid nurses than need ever be laid upon our own under-nurses. In the first place, the Sisterhoods always live in their own "communauté," which must be quite a separate building or part of the building. In this separate part of the building they always sleep and take their meals, and they retire to it at stated hours for their devotions. I believe that in some orders these occupy as much as two hours a day. During all these absences, the patients are left in the sole charge of the paid nurses, of whom M. Husson speaks in the above extract as a class very inferior to our own assistant nurses. The seriousness of this evil is obvious. The night-

watching is entrusted to some of the paid nurses specially appointed for this purpose, one of the Sisters going round the wards once in the course of the night, at an uncertain hour. The paid nurses sleep in dormitories, and take their meals in refectories belonging to the hospitals, without any special superintendence.

Another inconvenience of which I have heard serious complaints from medical men and directors of hospitals arises from the excessive scrupulousness of the Sisters upon the score of delicacy. This false modesty is greater in some orders than in others; in some cases I have been told that the Sisters themselves are annoyed at the unnecessary restrictions imposed upon them in this respect by their rule. These restrictions entirely deprive many patients of the care of the Sisters. Such patients are left to the care of the paid nurses.

Miss Nightingale, in an appendix to her "Notes on Hospitals" (p. 183), says, in speaking of the system which exists in the Paris hospitals, "The administration complains of the Sisters, and the doctors wish the Sisters 'were completely under them.' The Sisters complain of the administration, and wish that the order 'had it completely under itself.' And all are the best possible friends, and the collision and competition does the greatest possible good." After discussing various other systems, she continues, "The cardinal sin of paid nurses, of all classes, of all nations, is taking petty bribes and making petty advantages (of many different sorts and sizes) out of the patients. From this sin all orders, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, are exempt; but from it their servants are by no means exempt. . . . The rules of hospital head nurses in London, were they really religious women, who would neither take any present themselves nor be guilty of any kind of impropriety, would enable them to exercise a far more efficient surveillance over assistant-nurses, as to both these things, than can be exercised by Roman Catholic or Protestant orders living in community. All kinds of things between nurses and patients may and do go on in the sisters' wards, when the sisters are out of the way. A hospital head nurse is (or ought to be) always in command of her ward."

In the London hospitals the sleeping-room of the head nurse usually opens out of her ward, and overlooks it also by a window.

The treaties passed between the administration and the Sisterhoods, who undertake to serve any hospital or "hospice," are prepared according to the following form, for a copy of which I am indebted to the kindness of M. Husson :—

"TRAITÉ ENTRE L'ADMINISTRATION DE L'ASSISTANCE PUBLIQUE ET LA CONGRÉGATION DES SŒURS DE . . . .

"Entre . . . . . . il a été convenu ce qui suit :—

"ART. 1.—Les sœurs hospitalières de la congrégation de . . . . seront chargées de desservir l'H . . . .

"ART. 2.—Le nombre des sœurs est fixé à . . . . qui seront réparties entre les différents services, conformément à l'état d'organisation. Ce nombre pourra, par décision du Directeur de l'Administration préalablement approuvée par le Ministre de l'Intérieur, être augmenté ou diminué en raison des besoins du service. La congrégation sera consultée sur la modification à opérer.

"Toutefois dans les cas d'urgence, tel que celui de la maladie d'une des sœurs qui la mettrait hors d'état de continuer son service, la Supérieure générale pourra, en prévenant l'Administration, envoyer provisoirement une autre sœur pour la remplacer.

"La Supérieure remettra au directeur de la maison l'état nominatif, certifié par elle, des sœurs admises pour le service de l'établissement.

"ART. 3.—Les sœurs hospitalières seront placées, quant aux rapports temporels, sous l'autorité de l'Administration, et tenues de se conformer aux lois, décrets, ordonnances et règlements qui régissent l'Administration hospitalière.

"ART. 4.—Les principales fonctions des sœurs consistent à administrer aux malades tous les soins que leur état réclame, à veiller au maintien de la salubrité et de la propreté des

salles et des meubles, à l'entretien du linge, à la préparation et à la distribution des aliments, ainsi qu'à la distribution des médicaments, en se conformant aux règlements.

"La Supérieure désignera les sœurs pour les différents services, en donnant connaissance à l'Administration de chaque mutation.

"ART. 5.—Il sera fourni aux sœurs un logement séparé et à proximité du service. Elles seront meublées convenablement, nourries, blanchies, chauffées, éclairées aux frais de la maison, qui leur fournira aussi le gros linge, comme draps, taies d'oreillers, chemises ou surplies, nappes, serviettes, essuie-mains, torchons, et tabliers de travail.

"Il sera dressé, à l'entrée des sœurs, un inventaire du mobilier qui leur sera fourni, et il sera procédé, chaque année, au récolement de cet inventaire.

"ART. 6.—L'Administration paiera, chaque année, pour l'entretien et le vestiaire de chaque sœur, une somme de . . . payable par mois.

"ART. 7.—Le changement des sœurs pourra avoir lieu par la volonté de la Supérieure générale de la congrégation, ou sur la demande de l'Administration.

"ART. 8.—Les gens de service, infirmiers et infirmières, placés dans les services confiés aux sœurs, seront, sur la présentation de la Supérieure de l'établissement, nommés par l'Administration, qui pourra les renvoyer, soit spontanément, soit sur la demande de la Supérieure.

"ART. 9.—Lorsque l'âge ou les infirmités mettront une sœur hors d'état de continuer son service, elle pourra être conservée dans la maison, et y être nourrie, éclairée, chauffée, blanchie, fournie de gros linge, pourvu qu'elle compte au moins dix années de service dans les établissements charitables dépendant de l'Administration des Hospices de Paris ; mais elle ne recevra pas le traitement de celles qui sont en activité.

"Toutefois, une sœur qui, par suite d'accident arrivé dans le service, se trouverait dans l'impossibilité absolue de le reprendre, aura droit au bénéfice du présent article, bien qu'elle ne comptât pas dix années de service. Les sœurs seront considérées,

en toute position, comme filles de la maison, et non comme mercenaires.

"Art. 10.—En cas de décès de l'une des sœurs, il sera accordé, pour frais funéraires, une somme de cinquante francs, indépendamment du droit à une concession gratuite dans un cimetière.

"Art. 11.—L'aumônier ou chapelain de la maison ne pourra pas prendre ses repas avec les sœurs ; il n'aura aucune inspection sur leur conduite.

"Art. 12.—Dans le cas de la retraite volontaire de la communauté, ou de son remplacement par une autre congrégation, la Supérieure générale ou l'Administration des Hospices devra prévenir l'autre partie, et s'entendre sur l'époque de la sortie des sœurs de l'établissement. Dans tous les cas, cette sortie ne sera obligatoire qu'un mois après la notification faite par celle des parties qui voudra résilier le traité.

"Fait à . . . . en quintuple expédition—l'une pour la Supérieure générale, la seconde pour la sœur qui sera supérieure de l'H. . . . , la troisième pour l'Administration des Hospices, la quatrième pour le préfet, et la cinquième pour le Ministre."

The position of the Sisters who are employed by the "Bureaux de Bienfaisance" in visiting the poor in Paris is something to which we have no exact parallel in London. It may be described as a sort of combination of the offices of relieving officer and district visitor. The Sisters occupy a distinctly official position as representatives of the "Assistance Publique," by whom they are supported, and whose funds they dispense ; the national flag hangs over the door of every "maison de secours" where they live ; while, on the other hand, the well-known dress of the order sufficiently proclaims their ecclesiastical character and their position as representatives of the Church.

The general outline of the plan upon which the "secours à domicile" is administered is as follows :—

In each of the twenty arrondissements of Paris there is, as has already been said, a "Bureau de Bienfaisance," or local board

for the administration of relief. It is composed of the maire (who is *ex-officio* president) and his "adjoints," twelve unpaid administrators, and a paid "secrétaire-trésorier," who have power to add to their number as many "dames de charité" and "commissaires de bienfaisance" as they may think fit. They may also employ the services of as many Sisters of Charity as they think fit, of any religious order they may choose, subject to the approbation of the prefect, and of a sufficient number of paid medical officers, midwives, and school-masters and mistresses. The members of the bureau are renewed by one-fourth every year. The administrators are chosen by the Minister of the Interior, with the advice of the Prefect of the Seine, from four candidates, two of whom are nominated by the Director of Public Assistance, the other two by the bureau. The bureau meets twice every month, and has an annual general meeting, at which all the ladies, "commissaires," and medical officers are present, and of which a report is presented to the Director of Public Assistance.

In every arrondissement there are one or more "maisons de secours," where the Sisters employed by the Bureau live, and where they distribute food and clothing. They have generally a soup-kitchen and a "pharmacie," an infant-school, sometimes a "crêche," and sometimes schools for older children also.

Each arrondissement is divided into twelve parts, one of which is assigned to each administrator. The ladies and "commissaires" are likewise attached to special divisions. Their business is to assist in the distribution of relief, to collect and transmit to the Bureau information of all applications for relief, and to visit the poor themselves, in order to ascertain their circumstances, changes of abode, &c., of which a register is preserved.

The medical officers visit the poor, either at their own request or at that of the administrators, the commissaires, or the ladies. They perform operations and such dressings as the Sisters cannot undertake. They give gratuitous advice to the poor at the "maisons de secours," or elsewhere, at times appointed by the Bureaux.

The midwives attend poor women before and after as well as in their confinements.

The schoolmasters and mistresses are nominated by the Prefect upon the proposition of the Bureau ; they may be either secular or members of some religious community, and both they and the Bureau are bound in every respect to observe the regulations of the authorities respecting primary instruction.

The duties of the Sisters are thus defined: "Les sœurs doivent visiter à domicile les indigents malades, les panser au besoin, préparer et distribuer, sur les ordres des médecins, les tisanes et les médicaments simples qui seront indiqués dans le nouveau formulaire des Bureaux de Bienfaisance.

"Elles pourront être chargées, en outre, par le Bureau, de faire certaines distributions de secours en nature, mais toujours avec la participation et sous la responsabilité des secrétaires-trésoriers."

The Sisters employed by the "Bureaux de Bienfaisance" are generally, though not invariably, of the order of St. Vincent de Paule. They are said to do this work admirably.

The treaties into which the administration enters with the Sisters employed by the "Bureaux de Bienfaisance" are very similar to those passed with the Sisterhoods serving in hospitals.

I give a copy of one given to me by M. Husson.[1]

"TRAITE ENTRE LE BUREAU DE BIENFAISANCE DU ARRONDISSEMENT DE LA VILLE DE PARIS ET LA CONGRÉGATION DES SŒURS DE . . . .

"Entre les soussignés, Administrateurs du Bureau de Bienfaisance du . . . . arrondissement et la Supérieure générale de la Congrégation de . . . . , a été convenu ce qui suit :

[1] Arrêté Ministériel du 24 Sept., 1831. De Watteville, Législation Charitable, p. 363.

"ART. 1.—Les Sœurs hospitalières de la Congrégation de . . . . seront chargées du service de la MAISON DE SECOURS, établie rue . . . .

"ART. 2.—Le nombre des Sœurs est fixé à . . . . . .

"Ce nombre pourra, par délibération du Bureau de Bienfaisance, de l'avis du Directeur de l'Administration de l'Assistance publique et du Préfet de la Seine, et avec l'approbation spéciale du Ministre de l'Intérieur, être augmenté ou diminué en raison des besoins du service.

"La Congrégation sera consultée sur la modification à opérer.

"Toutefois, dans les cas d'urgence, tels que celui de la maladie d'une des Sœurs qui la mettrait hors d'état de continuer son service, la Supérieure générale pourra, en prévenant le Bureau, envoyer provisoirement une autre Sœur pour la remplacer.

"La Supérieure remettra au Bureau de Bienfaisance l'état nominatif, certifié par elle, des Sœurs admises pour le service de l'établissement.

"ART. 3.—Les Sœurs hospitalières seront placées, quant aux rapports temporels, sous l'autorité immédiate du Bureau de Bienfaisance, et tenues de se conformer aux lois, décrets, ordonnances et réglements qui régissent l'Administration des Bureaux de Bienfaisance.

"ART. 4.—Les principales fonctions des Sœurs consistent à visiter à domicile les indigents malades, à les panser au besoin, à préparer et à distribuer, sur les prescriptions des Médecins, les tisanes et les médicaments simples ; à faire certaines distributions de secours en nature dans la circonscription affectée à la Maison de Secours qu'elles sont chargées de desservir, en se conformant aux réglements et aux instructions des Bureaux de Bienfaisance.

"Les Sœurs ne rendront pas leurs services aux femmes ou filles de mauvaise vie qui seront atteintes du mal qui en procède ; elles ne seront pas tenues de visiter les malades la nuit, ni de les veiller.

"ART. 5.—Il sera fourni aux Sœurs une maison convenablement garnie de lits et de meubles, et des ustensiles nécessaires, tant pour elles que pour les besoins des pauvres ; elles seront

blanchies, chauffées aux frais de l'Administration, qui leur fournira aussi le gros linge, comme draps, taies d'oreillers, nappes, serviettes, essuie-mains, torchons et tabliers de travail ; elles ne payeront de contributions d'aucune espèce, et ne seront pas chargées des réparations de la maison occupée par elles.

"Quand les Sœurs seront malades, elles seront soignées et fournies de médicaments aux dépens du Bureau de Bienfaisance.

"Il sera dressé, à l'entrée des Sœurs, un état des lieux et un inventaire du mobilier qui leur sera fourni, et il sera procédé, chaque année, au récolement de cet état des lieux et de cet inventaire.

"ART. 6.—On n'associera aux Sœurs aucune femme ou fille externe pour le service des pauvres ; elles pourront cependant, avec le consentement de l'Administration, prendre pour les gros ouvrages une fille de service à leur choix, qui sera à la charge du Bureau.

"ART. 7.—Le Bureau de Bienfaisance payera, chaque année, pour l'entretien, la nourriture, l'éclairage et le vestiaire de chaque Sœur, une somme de *six cents francs* payable par mois.

"ART. 8.—Le changement des Sœurs pourra avoir lieu par la volonté de la Supérieure générale de la Congrégation, ou sur la demande du Bureau.

"ART. 9.—Lorsque l'âge ou les infirmités mettront une Sœur hors d'état de continuer son service, elle pourra être conservée dans la Maison et y être chauffée, blanchie, fournie de gros linge, pourvu qu'elle compte au moins quinze années de service dans les établissements charitables dépendant de l'Administration de l'Assistance publique de Paris ; toutefois, une Sœur qui, par suite d'accident arrivé dans le service, se trouverait dans l'impossibilité de le reprendre, aura droit au bénéfice du présent article, bien qu'elle ne comptât pas quinze années de service.

"Il sera accordé à la Sœur mise au repos une allocation de 400 fr. par an, qui sera acquittée sur les fonds de l'Administration générale de l'Assistance publique.

"La demande de mise au repos sera présentée au Bureau de Bienfaisance et transmise, avec son avis, au Directeur de l'Administration de l'Assistance publique qui statuera.

"ART. 10.—En cas de décès de l'une des Sœurs, il sera accordé, pour frais funéraires, une somme de *cinquante francs*, indépendamment du droit à une concession temporaire de terrain dans un cimetière.

"ART. 11.—Dans le cas de la retraite volontaire de la Communauté, de son remplacement par une autre Congrégation ou de suppression de service, la Supérieure générale, ou le Bureau de Bienfaisance, devra prévenir l'autre partie et s'entendre sur l'époque de la sortie des Sœurs de l'Établissement. Dans tous les cas, cette sortie ne sera obligatoire qu'un mois après la notification faite par celle des parties qui voudra résilier le traité.

"Fait à Paris, le
en sextuple expédition ; l'une pour la Supérieure générale ; la seconde pour la Sœur qui sera Supérieure de la MAISON DE SECOURS ; la troisième pour le Bureau de Bienfaisance ; la quatrième pour le Directeur de l'Administration de l'Assistance publique ; la cinquième pour le Préfet et la sixième pour le Ministre."

The total number of Sisters of various religious orders employed by the Administration of Public Assistance in Paris is,[1]

In Institutions	379
In the Bureaux de Bienfaisance . .	248
	627

I said at the beginning of this chapter that the Sisters who are employed in works of charity in France form part of a system, civil and religious, so unlike our own, that it is difficult to judge from the example afforded by them what would be the result of borrowing one part of that system without the rest. I have endeavoured to explain some of the ways in which the civil administration in France supplies a kind of framework for the action of religious orders, to which we have

[1] Exposé des Progrès et des Améliorations réalisés dans les Services dépendant de l'Administration générale de l'Assistance publique du 1er Janvier, 1852, au 31 Décembre, 1867, p. 11. (Paris : P. Dupont, 1868)

no counterpart in England. The discrepancy is perhaps even more obvious between the ecclesiastical position of sisterhoods in Catholic countries and that which they occupy in England.

It has been repeatedly pointed out to me by Roman Catholics, that with them the relation between every Sister and her Superiors is defined by the laws of the Church, which provide for the periodical inspection of convents and for appeals from the immediate Superiors to those placed over them, and so ultimately to the Pope. Whatever may be the value of such safeguards against the caprice or injustice of religious superiors, it is obvious that sisterhoods fitted into an ecclesiastical system like that of the Roman Catholic Church are likely to be moulded by their position into a much more regular form than is assumed by independent bodies springing up spontaneously in this country, and putting themselves into any relations they may happen to fancy with any individual clergyman who may happen to take a similar view of the connection.

To give anything like a complete account of the ecclesiastical system of which religious orders form a part in the Church of Rome would be an undertaking quite beyond the scope of the present work; but I may mention a few of the regulations of the decree of the Council of Trent "concerning Regulars and Nuns," to which I have been referred as containing the law of the Roman Catholic Church on this subject.[1] That decree ordains, among other things, that no Regular shall be allowed to hold any property, moveable or immoveable, nor to have the interest or administration of it; the Superiors are bound to provide all that is necessary, but nothing superfluous, to the members of the order. Monasteries or convents, however, may hold real property; the number of inmates is to be determined according to the amount of income arising from

1 Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, literally translated by T. A. Buckley, B.A. (London: Routledge and Co., 1851.) Mr. Buckley points out that in this decree the popular distinction between "monasteries" and "convents," as applied to religious houses for men and women respectively, is not observed.

it or from alms. No convent is to be erected without the permission of the Bishop. All Superiors are to be elected by secret voting. No woman may be elected to any such office under the age of forty, nor until she has been eight years professed; although, if there be no woman possessing these qualifications in the community, one may, with the consent of the Bishop, be chosen who has reached the age of thirty, and has been five years professed. No woman may be set over more than one convent. Convents immediately subject to the See of Rome are to be governed by the Bishops as its delegates; this is not the case with those who are governed by persons deputed in general chapters, or by other "Regulars." Nuns are to confess and communicate at least once a month; and besides this, the Bishop or other Superior is bound to provide an extraordinary confessor twice or thrice a year, whose duty it is to hear the confessions of all the nuns. No profession is to be made in any religious body whatsoever until the age of sixteen, and after a year's probation since taking the habit. Any profession made earlier is null, and does not bind to the observance of any rule, or entail any other effect whatever. No renunciation of property, or obligation, even though made upon oath or in favour of a pious object, is to have force unless it be made with the permission of the Bishop or his Vicar within the two months immediately preceding profession, nor unless profession actually follow thereupon. At the end of the period of probation the novices are to be either professed or dismissed. In like manner neither parents, guardians, nor relatives are to be allowed to give anything to the monastery out of the property of a novice while under probation, except for food and clothing, lest it should throw a difficulty in the way of the novice in leaving the monastery. Those novices who leave before profession are to receive back all that belongs to them. No girl over twelve years of age is to be allowed to take the religious habit, nor afterwards to make her profession, till the Bishop, or his Vicar, or other deputy, shall have diligently inquired into her inclination, and ascertained that she has neither been constrained nor seduced thereto, and that she knows what she is doing.

If her will be found pious and free, and she have the qualifications required by the rule, and the monastery be a suitable one, she is to be allowed to make her profession, the governess of the monastery being bound to give the Bishop a month's notice of it beforehand on pain of suspension from her office for as long as shall seem fit to the Bishop. No one, on pain of anathema, is to force any woman to enter a monastery except in the cases laid down by law, nor to prevent her if desirous to enter. No Regular alleging that he has entered a religious order through violence or intimidation, or before the fitting age, or through any other pretext, and wishing to lay aside his habit, or even withdraw with his habit without the permission of his Superiors, shall be listened to, unless it be within five years only from the day of his profession; and not then either, unless he have produced before his own Superior and the Ordinary the reasons which he pretends. But if, before doing so, he has of his own accord laid aside his habit, he shall in no wise be admitted to allege any cause, but shall be compelled to return to his monastery, and be punished as an apostate. No Regular is by force of any faculty soever to be transferred to a less rigid order, nor is permission to be granted to any Regular to wear the habit of his order secretly. These and all the other matters contained in the decree are to be observed by "all convents and monasteries, colleges and houses of all monks and regulars soever, as also of all religious virgins and widows soever;" and all kings, princes, republics, and magistrates are enjoined by virtue of holy obedience to vouchsafe to interpose their help and authority in support of the Superiors to whom their execution is entrusted.

Some of these regulations apply only to "regulars," that is to monks and nuns, properly so called, who take perpetual vows; and some to members of any religious body or "congregation." Some of the active orders would fall under the first description,—for instance, the Augustinian nuns of the Hôtel-Dieu; some under the second, for instance,—the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paule. It is needless to insist upon the difference between bodies occupying a distinct place in a

system like that of the Roman Catholic Church, and subject to laws acknowledged by all the members of that Church, on the one hand, and self-constituted bodies, subject to no law but the law of the land, which in no way recognizes their existence, on the other. Whatever may be the respective advantages of the two positions, it is obvious that we cannot apply experience derived from the working of the one system to plans in which it is proposed to employ the other, without allowing for serious modifications as the result of this difference.

The following extract from the official report of the result of the Census of 1861 in France[1] will show the numerical importance of the religious orders at that time. When the results of the next census are published, they will probably be found to have considerably increased.

"Communautés d'hommes :—58 maisons mères ; 37 maisons indépendantes ; 1,931 succursales.

	Nombre des membres.	Proportion pour cent.
Voués à l'enseignement	12,845	72·26
Voués aux devoirs hospitaliers . . .	389	2·19
Dirigeant des maisons de refuge ou des instituts agricoles pour les enfants .	496	2·79
Contemplatifs ou voués à des devoirs purement religieux	4,046	22·76
	17,776	100·00

"Communautés de femmes :—361 maisons mères ; 595 maisons indépendantes ; 11,050 succursales.

	Nombre des membres.	Proportion pour cent.
Vouées à l'enseignement	58,883	65·18
Vouées aux devoirs hospitaliers . . .	20,292	22·46
Dirigeant des maisons de refuge ou des instituts agricoles pour les enfants .	3,073	3·40
Contemplatives ou vouées à des devoirs purement religieux	8,095	8·96
	90,343	100·00

[1] Statistique de la France.—Recensement de 1861, p. cx.

"Ainsi le nombre des religieux des deux sexes était, en 1861, *au moins* de 108,119; c'est 1 religieux pour 346 habitants, ou en d'autres termes 2,892 religieux pour 1 million d'habitants.

"Sur 100 religieux des deux sexes, 67 sont voués à l'enseignement, 19 desservent des établissements de bienfaisance, 3 dirigent des maisons de refuge et autres, et 11 accomplissent des devoirs purement religieux.

"La Belgique comptait, en 1856, 3,230 religieux de tout ordre pour 1 million d'habitants. De 1846 à 1856 leur nombre s'est accru de 2,662. En admettant un accroissement égal de 1856 à 1861, on en aurait compté, dans cette dernière année, 15,961; soit 3,373 pour 1 million d'individus.

"D'après un recensement de même nature, il existait en Autriche, en 1859: 1° 10,449 religieux se répartissant entre 771 cloîtres ou maisons conventuelles, et 31 ordres, dont les plus importants étaient ceux des Franciscains, des Capucins, et des Bénédictins; 2° 6,463 religieuses réparties entre 283 maisons conventuelles et entre 36 ordres différents. Le plus grand nombre appartenait aux sœurs de la Miséricorde, aux Ursulines et aux Sœurs de la Charité. C'est un total de 16,912 religieux de tout ordre pour une population de 26,704,000 catholiques; soit 633 par million d'habitants. On a vu qu'en France cette proportion est de 2,892, et en Belgique de 3,373. On remarque qu'en Autriche le nombre des religieux est sensiblement supérieur à celui des religieuses. Nous avons constaté le résultat contraire dans les deux autres pays."

PART II

CHAPTER I.

THE WANTS OF THE POOR.

THE form of the question which I am about to propose for the consideration of my readers,—namely, what are the reasons for and against the institution of religious associations for charitable purposes,—suggests that the burden of proof lies upon those who are in favour of religious institutions. It does so, because the plan they propose would introduce a change into our practice, and an additional consideration into our theory of works of charity. The distinctive character of a religious association for works of charity is to regard those works as means to an end, not as the ultimate object for which the association exists, and it is upon the propriety of taking account of this ulterior aim in the organization of charitable associations that the whole controversy arises. The connection between religion and charity is so familiar and natural that people are apt to forget that this is so, and that the two objects are essentially distinct, however intimately they may be related. Hospitals, and other asylums for the poor and sick, were first established by religious orders, and for a long time were principally in their hands. In France, as we have seen, the legislation by which the management of hospitals and the administration of relief were transferred to secular bodies, retained the services of religious orders, as nurses in the hospitals, and as official almoners in the employment of the "Bureaux de Bienfaisance." In England, the religious orders themselves having been suppressed, the governing bodies of hospitals and the administrators of poor-law relief have had no such supply of trained women ready to their hands, but have engaged such nurses and such matrons of

workhouses and other subordinates as were needed, in the same way in which a private family engages servants,—that is, from hand to mouth. The results having been lately judged unsatisfactory, an attempt is being made to provide a remedy by the re-establishment, in various forms, of charitable "sisterhoods." What is the real nature of this remedy, as compared with other means of supplying the demand, and how would it be likely to work in the long run? Why should we introduce, or re-introduce, the principle of what is technically called "the religious life" into our institutions?

The reasons generally given rest upon two grounds and are apt to shift from one to the other. They resolve themselves pretty much into these two arguments. First, that the work done by Sisters of Charity, especially in nursing the sick, is work of so arduous and painful a character, that none but the highest motives will support a woman in the performance of it; *i. e.* that religion is required as a guarantee for fidelity in performing works of charity. And secondly, that such work affords an opportunity which none but religious women can turn to account of winning the souls of their patients to better things; *i. e.* that the administration of charity ought to be used as an engine for the promotion of religion.

I reserve for future examination the assumption upon which both these lines of argument rest,—viz. that religious organization is identical with, or at least succeeds in ensuring, true religion in the members of a charitable association. I shall attempt, in the next chapter, to trace the effect of such organizations upon individual character; but I must at once protest against a tacit exaggeration of the assumption in question, which constantly slides into the argument. It needs only to be distinctly stated, to be refuted and disavowed. Nevertheless it is one of those elastic delusions which rise up again, the moment one's finger is taken off them, and colour all the background of a discussion from which in their definite form they have been banished. They need to be plucked out by the roots instead of being merely beaten down for the time. The exaggerated form of the assumption that religious organization ensures true religion in individuals is the impression that all

members of religious associations are individually saints, and that all members of secular associations are individually irreligious. Comparisons are too often made between what may be expected of the highest religious character in the one case, and what may be feared from the utmost indifference to religion in the other. No wonder if, when such a weight is thrown into one scale, it is easy to turn the balance of imagination in favour of religious institutions. The effect of comparing the ideal Sister of Charity with the ideal "hireling" is to shift the argument from the comparative merits of different forms of organization to the intrinsic value of personal religion. But our estimate of the value of personal religion is not necessarily the measure of our willingness to adopt particular plans for the sake of promoting it. To say that certain institutions in which noble instances of Christian heroism have been produced are less wholesome, or less well adapted for a particular purpose, than certain other institutions into which mercenary and irreligious women may be admitted, is not necessarily to say that Christian heroism is of little value. Those who most heartily agree in their estimate of its value may differ as to its connection with particular subjects. I cannot too strongly protest against the confusion of thought by which a denial of the relevancy of certain considerations to a given question is understood to mean a denial of their truth or importance. But since we can scarcely dwell upon the respective merits, even for a special purpose, of different institutions without having in our minds, and being more or less influenced by, a general impression as to the comparative value of the types of character which they respectively tend to produce, I am obliged also to insist from the first upon the importance of equality in the grounds of such tacit comparisons. We cannot too carefully guard against the tendency to compare the achievements possible under one system with the mischief which may arise under the other. Such unfairness may arise on either side. If some people compare saints with hirelings, others compare enlightened and disinterested benevolence with Popish intrigue. All general comparisons ought of course in fairness to be made between the average Sister of Charity, on the one hand, and

the average charitable woman, who is not a "sister," on the other. My own belief is that if any large number of the two classes could be compared, their average religious characters would be found to be pretty equally balanced. It is, perhaps, too much to ask some of my readers to concede this even for the present, but I may at least beg them to reduce their prepossessions on either side to the lowest possible point, and, at any rate, to guard carefully against exaggeration.

I have said that I shall not in this chapter discuss the assumption, so often made, that religious organization does succeed in ensuring true religion in the members of institutions in which it is adopted. But in order to define the limits of the question to which this chapter is devoted, it will be necessary to explain that assumption a little more fully, and to show what position we must adopt with regard to it for our present purpose.

Religious institutions may be supposed to secure personal religion in their members in two distinct ways. They may be regarded as machinery either for the collection, or for the production, of true religion. Their function may be either to gather together such saints as we already possess, or to make saints of those who might not otherwise become so. Their supporters generally advocate them on both grounds. These two objects are indeed rarely distinguished with any clearness but it is of the utmost importance to our argument to separate them. For there is this great difference between them, that one is indisputably desirable, and the other manifestly open to criticism. The actual increase of true religion is an aim in which no Christian can refuse to sympathise. Such a claim upon sympathy can be resisted by Christians only upon the ground that the means proposed are inadequate or unsuccessful. There can be no disagreement about the worthiness of the end in view. But for that very reason this consideration may well be left to stand alone. There is no need to bring it into the discussion upon the utility of sisterhoods considered merely as charitable institutions. If any machinery could be devised by which ordinary women could be made into saints, it would not need justification on the ground of its usefulness in supplying nurses or visitors for the poor. If you believe in the

efficacy of any means for increasing the number of truly religious women, it is a mere idle form to prove, as an argument for using it, that they are especially wanted in a particular employment.

The case is very different with regard to the other object to which I have referred; namely, that of gathering together into charitable institutions a given number of truly religious women who would otherwise be living a different sort of life. This is a much more questionable object. It is an object as to the desirableness of which different opinions may be entertained by those who are most heartily agreed in their desire to promote true religion. It is a mere question of distribution, and it would never arise, or at least could never be decisively answered, except upon the assumption, whether avowed or tacit, that the first object, namely, that of increasing the number of saints, is not attained by such institutions. For there can be no need to be economical in the distribution of resources which we have the power of multiplying indefinitely. But if we have not that power, or at least do not venture to assume that we have it, the question of distribution becomes extremely important. It is one thing to increase the numbers or efficiency of an army, and quite another to concentrate its chief force upon a particular spot. In the case of an army it is obvious that the importance of the question of concentration depends very much upon the difficulty of increasing the number of troops; and that if their number is limited, the wisdom of concentrating them will depend upon the importance, or the comparatively exposed condition, of the spot in question. This being decided, the further question may arise in what manner and under whose command the post should be occupied.

This illustration will serve to show the different lines of inquiry which we have to pursue, and their mutual connection. We cannot deal with the question whether our available force of good women ought to devote themselves to the service of the poor at all, to any good purpose, except upon some assumption as to our power of increasing the number of such women, and we should scarcely have occasion to deal with it at all except upon the assumption that their number was practically limited. Supposing this to be granted, it cannot be

proved, upon grounds of utility, that they ought to go into sisterhoods for the purpose of serving the poor, unless it can be shown, first, that the service of the poor is a work in which they are more needed than elsewhere, by reason either of its importance or of its arduousness; and, secondly, that it is work of a kind which can be best done in that particular manner and under clerical guidance.

It is of course implied in what I have said that the service of the poor is not the only work for which good single women are wanted. This is not an assumption, like the practical limitation of their number, but an indisputable fact, or rather a truism, which I should apologise for mentioning, were it not so common to argue upon a tacit assumption to the contrary. The practical question before us, while considered from the charitable side only, must eventually take the form of a balance to be struck between rival demands upon a certain available force, as well as that of an inquiry into the most appropriate means of applying that force. I shall not at present attempt to strike any such balance. But it must not be forgotten that this must be done before we can arrive at any conclusion upon the whole matter. It introduces an element of comparison into our view of the real nature of the wants of the poor, which might be left out of account, were we considering only the best form of charitable associations, and not also the reasons for joining or for establishing them. Such a narrowing of the question would greatly have reduced the possible usefulness of this book, without any counterbalancing gain in point of clearness. I think, indeed, that it would have made any real clearness impossible, and that the real solution of many of the difficulties of the question is to be found in widening our views sufficiently to take into account all the interests concerned. A claim which is felt, but not distinctly acknowledged, is apt to cast a perplexing shadow over the performance of other duties to which we may attempt to devote ourselves exclusively in disregard of it; and thus domestic, charitable, and public duties are all made more difficult when unduly separated in our minds.

To sum up, we shall not in this chapter attempt to make

any comparison between Sisters of Charity and lay charitable women. Any such comparison which may be tacitly present in our minds must in fairness be confined to average specimens of either class. We are now about to inquire, not into the possibility of either collecting or producing good women, but into the nature of the demand for their services in a particular quarter. We need not, therefore, and indeed must not, as yet make any assumption about the effect of religious institutions upon character, except to the extent of granting for the present that the number of truly religious women at our disposal is practically limited, in order that the question may in the first place be dealt with as one of distribution and organization only. The inquiry before us in this chapter is into the nature of the real wants of the poor. This inquiry has an immediate application to the comparative fitness of two different forms of organization for supplying them, and a remoter reference to the degree of their urgency and importance when compared with other claims, for it is preliminary to the wider question, What are the mutual duties of independent single women and other classes of society?

I have already said that what are generally called works of charity may be roughly divided into the three branches of teaching, nursing, and the administration of relief. Only the last of these is necessarily work done by the comparatively rich for the poor. The two first are works which have to be undertaken by, or on behalf of, all classes of society. And this difference raises the question, which must be considered sooner or later, What is it which constitutes a work of charity? Under what circumstances, and for what reasons, that is, do we consider teaching and nursing to be as truly works of charity as almsgiving? The expression "works of charity" is obviously popular and vague, and what we want for the purpose of the present inquiry is not a strict definition of the terms, but a clear explanation of the different meanings which are usually conveyed by this phrase, in order that we may distinctly understand in which sense we are at present about to employ it.

There are three circumstances which, either separately or in combination, may be considered as imparting a charitable cha-

racter to any given action. These are the motives of the doer, the gratuitousness of the service, and the poverty of the recipient. Perhaps the phrase "works of charity" is most commonly intended to convey an idea of all three. It is in this collective sense that the word seems to be used in the rules of religious orders. I have never seen or heard of any attempt on the part of the founders or governors of such institutions to distinguish between these elements of charitableness (if I may use such an expression), or to restrict the objects of the institution to any one of them. Whatever may be the advantages or disadvantages of making such distinctions in practice, it is, however, manifestly inconvenient to neglect them in theory. The ideal "work of charity" is a service rendered to a poor person, without payment, and from Christian motives. The effect of using this compound notion without analysing it is too often to beg important questions about the right manner and extent of such services. It is still more fatal to clear reasoning on these subjects when the expression "works of charity" is variously used to convey either this compound idea, or any one of its three component parts, indiscriminately. When thus used it would sometimes include and sometimes exclude, for instance, services rendered to the rich from Christian motives, or services rendered to the poor by paid agents, or gratuitous services rendered to the poor by unbelievers.

I intend to use the word in the sense of services rendered to the poor, be the motives of the doers, and the arrangements about remuneration; what they may. The expression "services rendered" is of course intended to exclude anything done for the poor merely for the profit of the doer. The good of the poor must be the object of a work of charity, but the motive which impels the doer of it to seek the good of the poor may be pure benevolence, or a sense of duty, or a desire to obtain spiritual benefits for ourselves, or the love of Christ, or what you will. So long as the object in view is to better the condition of the poor, as a class, or as members of a class, the work undertaken may be called a work of charity.

The question how the moral or spiritual value of works of charity is affected by the motives by which they are prompted

belongs altogether to a later chapter. For my present purpose it is sufficient to observe not only that religious sisterhoods undertake work for the rich as well as for the poor, and paid as well as unpaid work (though the payment is always made to the institution, not to the individual), but that the cause of religious sisterhoods is almost always advocated in language which disregards the distinction between motives and objects, and which treats the complicated notion of works of charity as if it were as simple as it is attractive. I shall try to examine each of the elements of that notion separately in its proper place, and to show which of them ought in my judgment to be taken into account in organizing associations for charitable purposes, and why others should be excluded. But before we can discuss, to any good purpose, the organization best adapted for doing certain work, we must consider what the work itself consists of, and this is the business of the present chapter.

The first observation which arises upon this is, that work intended to better the condition of the poor may and does take as many forms as there are wants in life, multiplied by every possible variety of theory as to the appropriate way of supplying them: for poor people differ from rich ones only by being in some respects one stage further removed from that ideal state at which we are all more or less consciously aiming. Their wants are not peculiar to themselves. What they want we have ceased to want, if at all, only because we have been supplied with it; and what we want they will infallibly want as they reach our slightly higher level. The difference between rich and poor is not some one accidental circumstance affecting a certain definite portion of the human race, and requiring a certain definite treatment from those who are exempt from it, but a difference of place on an incline of indefinite length and imperceptible gradation. We talk of the poor as if they were marked off from the rich by a mark on their foreheads, which some people think might be removed at a blow, while others reverence it as a sign of the favour of Heaven. Works of charity are accordingly looked upon either as summary means of cure, or as a kind of form of worship, and are apt, according to the extreme to which we incline, to result in dis-

appointment or demoralization. The extreme of sanguine philanthropy is sufficiently familiar in connection with "Social Science." It is perhaps the least dangerous of the two, because, among other reasons, it is certain to be so soon refuted by experience. The other extreme, which regards the poor as in an especial manner "representatives of Jesus Christ," finds expression for example in a passage already quoted (p. 35) from the Manual of the Rule of the Franciscan Tertiaries, where we are told that the statutes direct the Superiors rather to commute penances than altogether to dispense from them. Fasts may be commuted into "other works of charity, such as praying for the dead, hearing masses, giving alms to the poor." Giving alms is here obviously considered as equivalent to other forms of worship. Though such extreme views may be rarely asserted, there is a constant tendency to exaggeration in either direction; that is, either to regard poverty as a remediable accident, or to invest our dealings with it with a romance and a sacredness which lead to erroneous conclusions and unwholesome practice. I shall have more to say upon both these dangers hereafter. At present I wish to call attention to the identity of most of the wants of life among the poor and the rich, for the sake of showing that the qualities required to ensure fidelity in ministering to the one cannot be very unlike those required in ministering to the other; and that it is difficult so to mark off and set in any striking light the peculiar conditions of services rendered to the poor, as to enable us to judge in what degree they call for any special qualifications in those who undertake them. Difficult as it is, I will make the attempt. It will perhaps be most convenient to begin with nursing, which is a comparatively definite task, and with respect to which the alleged advantages of the religious system are most often discussed.

Most people know pretty well what is the work of a sick nurse in a private family. It is not essentially different from the work of a hospital nurse. To attend upon patients for a certain number of hours in the day or night, to administer food and medicine, to perform certain personal services, such as making beds, changing linen, arranging for the admission of

air and light, &c., if necessary also to perform slight dressings and other surgical manipulations, to apply bandages, poultices, &c., and generally so to carry out the instructions of the doctor, as to promote physical well-being, and so to observe and report upon physical changes as to assist the doctor in judging of the case; these things form the ordinary routine of a nurse's work, whether she be employed in attendance upon rich or poor, in private houses or in hospitals. They require intelligence and training, as well as considerable physical strength. No one doubts that these things can be learnt and performed in the ordinary way of business, and without having recourse to religious orders. Miss Nightingale, in her Notes on Nursing (p. 71), says, with regard to the manual part, or "handicraft" of surgical nursing, "The writer, who has herself seen more of what may be called surgical nursing, *i.e.* practical manual nursing, than perhaps any one in Europe, honestly believes . . . . that it can only be thoroughly learnt in the wards of a hospital; and she also honestly believes that the perfection of surgical nursing may be seen practised by the old-fashioned 'Sister'[1] of a London hospital, as it can be seen nowhere else in Europe." The alleged advantages to be gained by employing religious orders as nurses do not depend upon any superior professional skill on their part. It seems almost superfluous to insist upon this. It is so obvious that the acquirement of skill in nursing, as in all other arts, depends upon opportunities of practice and careful training, and cannot be affected one way or the other by religious differences, that I should be ashamed to point it out, were it not that one so often meets with traces of something like a belief in the transmission of surgical skill by imposition of hands, mysteriously qualifying nuns as nurses, apart from hospital training. The real ground upon which alone any superior fitness can logically be claimed for religious orders over women trained in secular institutions as hospital nurses is the moral ground. The faithful performance of a nurse's duties, no doubt, does demand a high moral

[1] It is scarcely necessary to repeat that this word is here used as synonymous with "head-nurse"—not with reference to members of any religious order.

standard, and the connection between religious institutions and morality is close and obvious. Let us inquire a little more particularly into the duties of a nurse, as distinguished from her work.

The reason why the faithful performance of a nurse's duties demands a high moral standard is that her work often involves considerable physical fatigue, that there is much that is disagreeable and painful in its nature, and that she is necessarily exposed to some strong temptations. We will consider these circumstances separately.

The purely physical fatigue of nursing is partly unavoidable, resulting from the necessity for much standing, frequent stooping, and lifting of weights. This unavoidable fatigue is probably not greater than that which is incurred by domestic servants, washerwomen, and other female labourers. In the rank of life to which most sick nurses belong, such bodily exertion is not so unusual as to constitute any peculiar trial of endurance. The real strain upon the physical powers of nurses arises partly from the often unavoidable impurity of the atmosphere of sick rooms, partly from their being peculiarly liable to occasional extra pressure of work, owing to the insufficiency of the staff of attendants, combined with the impossibility, to a woman of any humanity, of leaving such work as this undone, however much it may overtask her own strength. It is perhaps impossible to avoid occasional extra pressure in any work undertaken to supply so fluctuating a demand as that which depends upon illness. In hospitals and other institutions for nursing the sick, this occasional extra pressure is one of the circumstances for which provision may, and always should be made. In private houses an acute attack of illness generally so upsets the established order of things, that the nurse who is sent for for the occasion is pretty sure to find that she has either too much or too little to do. One of her first duties should therefore be to restore order, and at least so to regulate and explain the limits of her own work as that the patient's friends may provide for whatever she cannot safely undertake. The danger of overtasking the strength of a willing nurse will however always be greater in a private family, where she is not under the protection of any experienced superintendent, than in

a well-managed hospital. Where nurses are sent out to visit the sick poor in their own homes, there will of course also be occasional extra pressure; but the rule in most such arrangements being that the nurses merely visit their patients at stated hours, as the doctor might do, to perform dressings, &c., and do not undertake night watching or such work for the sick as can be done by untrained attendants, so that the patients are in no case entirely dependent upon the nurse, the times of extra pressure may in some degree be met by properly restricting the number of cases to be visited at any one time.

In short, in all branches of nursing the danger of over-fatigue from occasional extra work may be lessened by prudent management, but it can perhaps never be entirely got rid of, nor even reduced quite so low as in most other employments. The uncertainty which attends illness makes it impossible always to adjust our preparations for it so as to avoid waste of strength and even of life. This is one of the regular risks of the service.

I have been speaking hitherto of purely physical fatigue; but perhaps the most trying part of the fatigue of nursing arises from the strain on the mind produced by constant suspense, and the constant sense that upon the nurse's own watchfulness may depend the life or death of another; and not only of a fellow-creature, but of one who has almost inevitably become more or less endeared by the very fact of dependence. Of course this strain is constant only where there are a sufficient number of patients to ensure there being always some in a critical state. In private nursing it is only occasional, and even in the wards of a hospital there are no doubt often quiet times, when there is nothing to cause special anxiety to a well-practised nurse. Still, in all attendance upon the sick, the necessity of watchfulness is enforced under such penalties as must tend to keep up a continual tension of mind in every good nurse, though it may be often slight and so habitual as to be scarcely felt till relaxed. This slight habitual tension is frequently increased to strong anxiety when the nurse is brought face to face with the issues of life and death, and rises occasionally to the highest pitch of intensity when she feels herself, as

sometimes happens, engaged in something like a single-handed struggle with death. For in many cases the doctor can only give the word of command—it is the nurse who must fight the battle. All this constitutes an amount of wear and tear which is felt in proportion to the degree of heartiness with which the work is embraced. I need scarcely point out that it also constitutes an attraction so powerful that a nurse whose heart is in her work longs for her ward as a sailor longs for the sea, or as a soldier who has been used to real service longs for action. All of them are of course aware that there is a certain price to be paid in fatigue, and a certain risk to life and limb to be encountered—but it will be an evil day for England when such risks are not among the attractions of the public service.

I have almost forestalled what I had to say respecting the painfulness of some parts of a nurse's work. For I believe that it is chiefly in this struggle with death and suffering on behalf of her patient that a nurse herself suffers; not, as is commonly supposed by the inexperienced, in the mere sight of pain and ghastliness. There is of course a period of apprenticeship to be passed through before a nurse becomes used to such sights and sounds, when many nurses suffer from sickness and nervous shrinking just as medical students do. Probably every nurse suffers more or less during this process of seasoning; but a woman who could not get used to such things ought never to be, and probably never would be, a nurse at all. This is a perfectly measurable evil; and the average amount of discomfort from this cause is probably less in the case of nurses than in that of medical students; because they are, or may be, introduced to the sight of wounds and operations more gradually than the students, and have, from the first, in a greater measure the benefit of that best of antidotes, active helpfulness. There is all the difference in the world between looking on at the dressing of a wound and being actually engaged in it; and every one who has tried both knows how much the painfulness of the sight is lessened by action, and by the necessity of fixing one's attention on one's own manipulations instead of allowing it to dwell upon the patient's suffering. In the case of surgeons no one ever supposes that any extraordinary heroism

is required to enable them to see or to inflict pain with composure. It is one of the most universal and familiar as well as precious blessings of this life that habit infallibly reconciles us to our daily employments, even when they are much more unmitigatedly painful than that of the nurse or surgeon. There may be instances in which some particular circumstance retains its repulsiveness in spite of habit in some particularly sensitive minds or bodies, like Nelson's sea-sickness, but these are exceptions which prove the rule. Were it otherwise, neither nurses nor doctors, nor I may add dentists, sailors, stewards and stewardesses, not to mention the members of various other common trades and professions, could continue to exist. I have heard a surgeon and a stewardess speak in precisely the same terms of their first six months' experience—they did not think any earthly consideration would induce them to go through it again, but they laughed at the idea of shrinking from any of the incidents of their respective employments in later years. I am sure, from many inquiries, that this is the common experience of nurses, whether "religious" or secular. Many of their duties are painful and disagreeable at first, but after a short apprenticeship they infallibly get over the first shrinking from these things (which, I may add, some people never feel, just as some people are good sailors from the first); and after a time their painfulness is scarcely felt as a drawback to the employment.

On the other hand, its interest, to those who have the natural taste for it of which few women are quite devoid, and which in some cases amounts to a passion, is intense and ever fresh. There is perpetual variety; and if there is much failure and discouragement, there is also the constant pleasure of conferring certain alleviation if not comfort, and, in the great majority of cases, all the delights of recovery to reward the care of the nurse. It must not be forgotten that though to the imagination of outsiders a hospital means a place where people go to suffer and perhaps die, or undergo terrible operations, to nurses it means a place where people come to recover—where even wounds and sickness, instead of being frightful exceptions, fall into a regular routine, and where five

or six recoveries for every death would be thought a small proportion.[1]

But although a nurse whose heart is in her work will feel that the labour and the trials of her lot are well repaid by its importance, and by its many interests and pleasures, it ought always to be remembered that these trials and labours constitute a serious element of temptation, and that there are others of a no less serious kind, necessarily belonging to the nature of the work. Exhausting bodily work in an atmosphere which it is at all times difficult, and sometimes impossible, to keep pure, coupled with occasionally considerable anxiety of mind, are conditions under which the temptation to drink will sometimes be too strong for any but women of high principles. The temptation may be made almost overpowering by bad management and neglect of the nurse's health; or, by a careful provision for her innocent and wholesome refreshment of body and mind, by proper regulations about meals, air and exercise, limitation of hours of work, and cheerful recreations, it may be so reduced as to be unfelt by habitually sober women; but it must never be overlooked. In well-managed hospitals and institutions this difficulty is now practically overcome. In the best-managed hospitals nowadays, it sometimes happens that probationers have to be dismissed for this cause, but drunkenness among the nurses is, I believe, practically unknown. This improvement has been attained, and can be kept up, only by constant care and watchfulness on the part of the authorities, and by the gradual formation of a high standard of professional honour among nurses. It ought to be one of our great objects in dealing with nurses to cultivate such a standard.

Another continual source of temptation to nurses is the ineradicable tendency among patients to offer fees. This must be dealt with in the same manner as the temptation to intemperance, but it is much more difficult to get rid of the practice. It is less easy to detect, and less obviously immoral.

[1] The average rate of mortality "over all the cases" in Guy's Hospital in the year 1868 was 9·72 per cent., or 5·96 for surgical and 16·40 for medical cases. (Statistical Tables of Patients treated in Guy's Hospital during 1868, by J. C. Steele, M.D. Superintendent.)

The ordinary conscience requires some special cultivation before it can be trusted to condemn such a transaction.

The last and most serious temptation to which nurses are especially exposed is that of impropriety of conduct in their relations with the men with whom they are brought into constant and familiar association at all hours, with frequent opportunities for private meetings, and under circumstances sometimes calling for the exercise of considerable prudence and delicacy, and which at the same time have an undeniable tendency to break down many of the ordinary restraints of conventional propriety. The effect of habitual familiarity with all the subjects not usually mentioned connected with disease as it presents itself in the wards of our public hospitals, and of association with young men who are rapidly acquiring the same familiarity with these subjects, is to put womanly modesty to a severe test; a test from which it may come out strengthened and purified, but under which, on the other hand, it may fail.

I shall not, in this place, attempt to estimate the comparative tendency of religious and secular institutions to promote temperance, honesty, and chastity. I shall content myself at present with having pointed out the reasons for which the profession of nursing peculiarly demands the exercise of these virtues.

But further, not only are nurses exposed to considerable fatigues, trials, and temptations, but their position no doubt affords an opportunity for acquiring and exercising influence of the most important kind. There is a daily and hourly call for patience, tenderness, and gentleness of behaviour to patients often unreasonable from weakness, and there are proportionate opportunities of winning their gratitude and affection. There are days and weeks, or even months, of constant intercourse, and interchange of little offices of kindness, which bring a good nurse and her patient into a very endearing relation. There are hours of severe suffering, and long intervals of softened feeling, when the hardest hearts lie comparatively open, and when the nurse who has faithfully used her opportunities of earning the patient's gratitude and esteem will be listened to as perhaps no one else could hope to be heard. And there is not unfrequently the approach of death, with its impressive

lessons for the spectators, its unfathomed possibilities of experience for the patient. At such times a nurse's words, and still more her behaviour, may produce lasting impressions for good or for evil. Such opportunities of entering into intimate and beneficial relations with patients raise nursing from a handicraft to a work of the highest moral interest.

I have said without reserve, that I believe the profession of nursing to be one which peculiarly demands certain virtues, and for those virtues I have not the slightest doubt that true religion is the strongest possible security. Therefore, whichever may be the institution in which the greatest number of members are women who truly fear and serve God, in that institution I should expect, other things being equal, to find the greatest number of nurses whose professional conduct was thoroughly exemplary. But I have already protested against the premature assumption that this superiority necessarily or generally belongs to sisterhoods.

On the other hand, the virtues to which we are alluding may exist in the highest degree without religion. I do not say that they have no connection with it, or that they would or could exist in an equal degree in a time or country where there was no religion. I say they and it may be separated in individuals. It would be mere prejudice to deny that a woman may be absolutely and entirely temperate, honest, and chaste, gentle, patient, and forbearing, without being at all religious. Ought such a woman to be disqualified from becoming a nurse, because her honesty did not allow her to profess a motive which she did not feel? Would not the sick, whether rich or poor, as well as the women themselves, be losers thereby? It is no premature assumption to say that the theory of religious institutions is to exclude such women, while that of secular institutions is of course freely to admit them.

I am bound also to own that not only the profession of religion, but religion itself, may exist where these moral qualities are wanting, or very defective. And of course the truest piety may exist where the intellectual and physical qualifications of a nurse are wholly absent. In fact, the line which separates religious from irreligious women, and still more em-

phatically the line which separates those who do from those who do not make a profession of religion, lies in a somewhat different direction, both in excess and defect, from the line between those who are and those who are not qualified to become thoroughly good nurses. It would, therefore, be obviously foolish to choose nurses according to their religious, rather than their moral, intellectual, and physical merits, were nursing itself the ultimate object in view.

But the use which a nurse will make of the opportunities above described for exercising influence over the minds of her patients is of course directly affected not only by the degree of her own personal piety, but by the light in which she has been trained to regard her office. The question whether, and if so by what means, it is possible to train women to confer spiritual benefits, and how far such benefits are specially appropriate to the sick, will be examined hereafter. At present I shall only say that whether proselytizing be a good or a bad thing, it is in practice found to be almost inevitable to some extent where the members of religious associations are employed as nurses. It may no doubt be sometimes practised by individual secular nurses, but the tendency cannot but be stronger where the care of the body is avowedly regarded as a means to the end of benefiting the soul. Apart from direct proselytism, there is an influence of which it is impossible either to doubt or to measure the force, which is exercised upon the minds of patients by the mere assumption of what may be called the livery of religion by Sisters of Charity. I shall presently inquire further into the effects of this tacit influence of religious symbols.

There is one other respect in which the duties of a nurse are likely to be somewhat differently regarded by those who have been trained in different schools. Miss Nightingale,[1] in

[1] Notes on Hospitals, p. 187, Appendix. I must caution my readers against supposing that I give this extract as representing the sum of Miss Nightingale's opinion on this question. The fact is that the question which she is discussing in the passage from which I have quoted it is a different one from that upon which I am here engaged. Miss Nightingale is comparing the merits of five different systems under which religious and secular authorities, identical and independent authorities in the nursing and admi-

summing up her observations upon different systems of nursing, says, "Take it which way you will, the idea of the 'religious order' is always, more or less, to prepare the sick for death; of the secular to restore them for life. And their nursing will be accordingly. There will be instances of physical neglect (though generally unintentional) on the part of the former; of moral neglect on that of the latter." There need not of course be instances of neglect of either kind upon either theory; but when that which one person regards as the ultimate end is by another regarded as the means to an end of overpowering comparative importance, it is easy to see that the results must be different; and that the most earnest attention will be likely to be bestowed by each nurse upon that part of the work which most evidently tends to promote the end she has in view—in the one case the physical, in the other the spiritual, well-being of her patient. And since physical well-being depends wholly upon the preservation of the life of the body, while spiritual well-being is presumed to be to a considerable extent independent of it, it is impossible that the struggle against death should not appear more important in the one case than in the other.

Any inquiry into the subject of nursing affords a peculiarly favourable opportunity for estimating the demand for religious women in the service of the poor, as compared with the demand for their services elsewhere: for sickness is common to all classes, and we can easily compare the work of nursing the rich with that of nursing the poor.

If it be the service of the poor which especially demands the highest motives, then there will be a broad distinction between the qualifications required in hospital or district nursing, and those required for nursing in private families. Now, although some of the trials to virtue which I have mentioned above are found in greater force in hospitals than in private houses (whether of rich or poor), there are others

nistration of the same hospital, and male and female nurses and authorities, are variously combined; and it would be impossible to give a fair account of her conclusions without quoting the whole discussion. The moral which she appends to the sentence above quoted is, "Unite the two, and there will be fewer of either;" but this is obviously inapplicable to a comparison between two incompatible systems of organization.

which are strongest in private nursing, where there is no experienced superintendence, and where the conditions of the nurse's life and work are necessarily more variable than in any regular institution. Perhaps it would be safe to say that as a general rule there is rather more temptation, and rather less hardship, in nursing the rich than the poor; but the work is so nearly identical that probably nobody would think of saying that while ordinary morality was sufficient for the one, Christian heroism was required for the other. This identity has been so instinctively felt by the founders of sisterhoods, as well as of secular institutions, that in practice the same institutions of either type generally undertake to supply nurses for both rich and poor. Sisters of Charity and Deaconesses may be engaged as nurses by rich patients on application to their religious superiors on precisely the same terms as those on which sick nurses are sent from any secular institution; that is, upon the payment of a sum fixed at about the same rate in either case by custom, and to be paid in both cases not to the individual, but to the institution. It thus appears that the kind of work in which we are asked to believe that the highest Christian motives are required as a guarantee for fidelity is not confined either to unpaid work, or to the service of the poor.

If on the other hand it be something in the nature of nursing which demands true religion in those who undertake it, then religious women are needed as much to nurse the sick rich as the sick poor. How far sisterhoods are adapted for the service not of the poor, but of the sick, is a question which I shall have occasion to examine hereafter. It is beside my present purpose, which is to inquire especially into the nature of the wants of the poor. Nursing is one of the most important of those wants, but it is one which they share with the rich, not one by which they are distinguished from them. The gifts which qualify a woman to act as a nurse, therefore, do not necessarily mark her out for the service of the poor.

Precisely the same reasoning may be applied to the subject of education. I have explained in the introductory chapter the reasons for which I have decided not to undertake any inquiry

into that subject. I will therefore at present only say in general terms that the actual work of teaching requires certain intellectual and moral qualities, which may exist without personal religion, but which no doubt are fostered and strengthened by it where it does exist; that the occupation is not, so far as I know, one of any special temptation, nor so laborious as to imply any very great courage in those who undertake it; that therefore religion does not seem to be indispensable as a guarantee for fidelity in this work, though no doubt especially desirable in those who are entrusted to some extent with the training as well as the teaching of children; and that in this case, as in that of nursing, it is easy to compare the work of teaching poor children with that of teaching the children of the rich, and that both these branches of education are undertaken by religious orders in Roman Catholic countries, and by Deaconesses in Germany; that the result of such a comparison would seem to me to be that nearly the same moral and considerably higher intellectual qualifications are required in teaching the children of the rich than those of the poor, while in either case the importance of securing personal religion in the teacher will depend upon the degree in which she is entrusted with the training as well as the teaching of her pupils.

The case is very different when we come to the third branch of our subject, namely, the administration of relief. This must always be a purely charitable work, in the sense in which I am using that word, *i.e.* a work undertaken for the benefit of the poor as a class, or as members of a class. Indeed the expression "administration of relief," though I have been obliged to employ it to distinguish the attempt to minister to the necessities of the poor as such from those special efforts which are directed to the care of the sick and of the young, is too narrow to be quite appropriate. For, under this head, I wish to include all systematic house-to-house visitation of the poor, and any efforts made to improve their circumstances, whether pecuniary or not. The most familiar form of such systematic visitation is that in which it is undertaken by district visiting societies, in connection with, and generally under the direction of, the parish clergy; but there are many other similar agencies

at work in London. My object is to inquire into the nature of the services which can be rendered to the poor by systematic visitation, in order to judge whether charitable sisterhoods are in any special manner qualified or disqualified for the task.

The great difficulty of this inquiry is also the great difficulty of the work itself, and consists in the vagueness and variety of people's ideas as to the object to be accomplished. Definiteness of aim is the root of all order, and the beginning of all economy of strength; but nothing can be more indefinite than the notion conveyed by the title of (*e.g.*) "district visitor," as to the nature of the task to be undertaken in assuming it. We all know pretty well what are the tasks undertaken by women who become nurses or teachers, and we can judge more or less of the feelings with which they are regarded by their clients, because sickness and childhood are among the incidents of everybody's life. But a lady who becomes a district visitor can scarcely have any experience of poverty to guide her in dealing with the poor, and is not likely, until she has acquired some experience, to have any distinct idea of what is expected of her by them. In describing the nature of her work, we must remember that none but those who have been more or less engaged in it are likely to be at all familiar with the ordinary life of the poor, as it presents itself to such visitors.

I do not know a more depressingly bewildering experience than that which befalls a lady on first undertaking to visit a district of poor houses. She has probably offered herself as a district visitor to the clergyman of the parish, and as such she announces herself, or is announced by him, to the inhabitants of the district assigned to her. In nineteen out of twenty cases, she is welcomed at once, and finds herself, either with or without some kind of pretext of lending books, collecting club-money, or the like, launched upon a course of periodical visits to the families in her district, to be paid probably at intervals of a week or a fortnight. She feels that the very readiness with which she is admitted is a sort of claim upon her to do something, and she certainly would not have undertaken such work at all except in the hope of doing something useful; but what? The difficulty arises not from any lack, but from the

multitude and confusion of wants, spiritual, moral, social, intellectual, and physical, with which she is brought into contact. The very first necessity which is forced upon her, if she thinks at all, is that of coming to a distinct understanding with herself as to what she can and will attempt to accomplish. It is however scarcely possible that she should arrive at any such distinct understanding until she has acquired considerable experience, bought by many failures and disappointments, and many sorrowful doubts whether she has not been doing more harm than good on the whole. The way in which such perplexities and discouragements drive women to seek the guidance and the relief from the sense of responsibility which is offered by sisterhoods in works of charity will be more fully dwelt upon in my next chapter. At present my business is to examine the nature of the problem which is thus set before them.

There are three principal objects which may be kept in view in visiting the poor, and to the pursuit of which people will assign different degrees of importance according to their estimate of their intrinsic value, and of the possibility of attaining them. These are the diminution of the distress caused by poverty through gifts either in money or in kind, the exercise of moral and spiritual influence, and the establishment of a medium of communication between different classes of society.

1. The attempt to diminish the distress caused by poverty by the distribution of what may be called raw wealth is full of difficulty, and we have heard a great deal of late about its dangers. The objections to it are too painfully familiar and obvious to need more than the barest mention. They resolve themselves into the two heads of lessening the self-dependence of those who take and wasting the resources of those who give. I believe that more stress ought to be laid than is commonly done upon the latter objection. The bad moral effects of mere almsgiving on the receiver are perhaps sufficiently acknowledged in theory. But it is so absolutely impossible to see distress as it may be seen any day in any part of London, and be content to do nothing for its relief, that we shall scarcely learn to refrain from giving mere alms, till we see our way to some

better manner of spending our money in helping the poor. Perhaps the only thing which would ever effectually cure the rich of the self-indulgent practice of almsgiving would be a real appreciation of the value on behalf of the poor of the wealth which they squander in alms. This is one of the lessons which a district visitor is pretty sure to be taught by painful experience. When one of the rare opportunities arises, which do sometimes occur, of helping an individual or a family over a crisis, it is a bitter thing to find oneself unable to take advantage of it because the money at one's disposal has been frittered away upon temporary alleviations—alleviations very likely rather to oneself than to the recipient. But, though a short experience will generally be sufficient to restrain the thoughtless lavishness of a beginner, much more is needed to teach a visitor how to spend money most usefully for the benefit of the poor. Those who want it most are of course as a general rule those who are least fit to be trusted with it, and the least direct and palpably demoralizing ways of giving it are just those of which it is most difficult to ascertain the exact results. For instance, one of the commonest perplexities of a visitor arises from being applied to for a loan of some moderate sum, and generally for a few days only. At first sight lending small sums of money seems an easy way of helping people over the difficulties of a hand-to-mouth life, and yet it is the most certain way to sow a whole crop of difficulties for the future. How is it possible to enforce payment? Can a lady pretend really to feel the want of a pound or two? If not, can she insist on being paid avowedly for the sake of the effect on the debtor's mind? Is it fair to put poor people into a position of so much temptation,—to raise a claim which they know to be more or less artificial, and which yet it is dishonourable in them not to satisfy? Yet when sudden demands come upon them, and they have money perhaps actually due, or close in prospect, they would often have to give up what they can never hope to replace for anything like the sum for which it goes, unless somebody will lend the money for a few days. Then there is the question of giving work for the benefit of the people employed. Are we to take our stand upon a severe determina-

tion not to mix business and charity, not to interfere with the natural process of supply and demand, only to employ the best workers? or are we ever, and if so in what cases, justified in sparing the feelings of the honest poor by creating a little fictitious demand for such work as they can do, in order surreptitiously to convey rather more than the shop-prices into their pockets? This is constantly done in a systematic way by clothing-clubs, work-societies, and such partly self-supporting, partly charitable institutions, where the poor are in a sense bribed to save or work for themselves by the addition of a percentage to their own payments. What exactly are the promoters of such societies doing? to whom does the money really go, and what effect does it in the long run produce? Again, are we to help only those who help themselves? or if distress be the circumstance which gives the poor a claim upon our assistance, at what point ought its degree or its continuance to begin to have the contrary effect? When ought we to call it hopeless? I mention these perplexities which beset the lowest and most obvious aim of a visitor, that of bettering the mere pecuniary circumstances of the poor, in order to show, or rather to remind, my readers how very difficult an art the administration of relief is, and how sorely amateurs stand in need of some fixed principles for their guidance in it. To meddle with these things without doing much more harm than good requires a clear head and a sound judgment, and a good deal of experience besides.

2. The endeavour to confer moral and spiritual benefits in visiting the poor is quite as difficult, if not as dangerous, a part of the visitor's work as mere almsgiving. The obvious objection to making this our principal aim in visiting the poor is that, whereas there can be no question about our being richer than they are, either separately or collectively, we have no sort of right to assume that we are either morally or intellectually superior to any individual by reason of his poverty; although of course there are some moral and intellectual advantages which are inseparable from that degree of wealth which gives the command of leisure, and which we may reasonably wish to impart if we could. It is impossible for the most tolerant and

modest visitor of the poor not to perceive that their want of education does produce in some respects a lower moral standard than that to which we are accustomed. Yet unless protected by a thick shell of insensibility and arrogance, how difficult it is to feel ourselves justified by our social position, or even by our education, in preaching to full-grown people, placed in circumstances of which we know so very little, and in which we must often feel that so far as we can guess we should be so very unlikely to make even so good a fight as they do. The more really raised above them by education a lady is, the more keenly is she likely to feel these difficulties. The fact is that it is no easier to transfer morality than to transfer wealth. And when in this particular instance the means are compared with the end proposed, the disproportion is almost ridiculous. A lady must have a very high estimate of the power of her own influence who seriously thinks that in a series of visits of ten minutes paid once a week or once a fortnight to the mothers of twenty or thirty different families, she can hope to produce any great improvement in the moral or intellectual condition of those families. Of course out of a number of families so visited there will be some people with whom she may make real friendships, and with whom she may have the opportunity of exchanging (for there is quite as much chance of receiving as of giving in such cases) the pleasure and help which every real friendship may produce. But these friendships are accidental results of the introduction, and must not be counted among the special advantages of district visiting. The same time spent in paying visits to people in any rank of life, and for any purpose, would probably give rise to as many friendships, or more; for it must be remembered that the difference of social position and education produces such a difference in habits of thought and expression, that intercourse with the poor is almost like intercourse carried on in a foreign language. This must always be a hindrance, though by no means an insuperable hindrance, to real intimacy.

Yet though district visiting is altogether inadequate to produce any direct and appreciable improvement in the moral and intellectual condition of the inhabitants, it no doubt

affords continual opportunities of placing some of the advantages of education at the disposal of the uneducated. A lady who behaves respectfully and pleasantly in the capacity of district visitor is sure to have her advice asked on all sorts of questions on which the poor rightly think she has better opportunities of acquiring information than they have, and indeed she will probably often be ashamed, and perhaps alarmed, at the exaggerated importance which will be attached to her opinion. She may continually find opportunities of doing real if not very important services by finding out the best way of doing things which it requires a little time to inquire into, or upon which perhaps the advice of professional men may be useful, and easily accessible to her, though not directly within the reach of the poor themselves. And especially she can give her poorer neighbours the benefit of intercourse with a mind of wider range than their own. The especial advantage which the educated have over the uneducated in the debatable ground between the moral and intellectual qualities is that they live with a reference to a longer period and a wider circle of interests, that they take into account yesterday and to-morrow as well as to-day, and the interests of those who are remotely as well as immediately concerned in the results of their conduct. It is scarcely possible to be in habits of frequent friendly intercourse with people in a lower position than one's own without having many opportunities of being useful to them, if only one will be content to do for them what they want, rather than what one thinks they ought to want. And during such friendly intercourse real moral or intellectual superiority, on whichever side it may exist, cannot well fail to produce some good results.

With regard to the spiritual influence which is often considered as one of the objects of district visiting, exactly the same considerations apply, and with even greater force. We have no right to assume that the district visitor is necessarily superior in piety or religious experience to any individual of the poor whom she undertakes to visit; although there is a degree of ignorance and misery which is extremely unfavourable to religion, and which, it must be remembered, opposes an effectual obstacle to most religious influences, to be removed

only indirectly by lessening poverty; and although there may be continual opportunities arising out of the friendly intercourse of which I have been speaking, for giving and receiving spiritual sympathy and teaching. I say for giving and receiving it, for I believe it is the experience of the best and most deeply religious visitors of the poor that they learn at least as much as they teach, I might say much more than they can ever hope to teach, from intercourse with the poor. The question how far visiting can be considered as an adequate means of conveying spiritual benefits must be left for a later chapter. At present I can only touch upon the subject of religion for the purpose of repeating what I have already said in the case of nursing, that while the actual work of visiting and relieving poor people may be, and constantly is, done effectually from other than religious motives, that is, in this case, from simple benevolence, the use which will be made of the influence which may thus be acquired will of course depend upon the degree of religion in the visitor. Whatever effect may be produced by religious institutions upon individual character, therefore, will tell in some degree upon the qualifications of their members for this work. But we have no more right to take it for granted that all the poor require religious teaching from their visitors, than that all the sick require it from their nurses. The patients and the people visited would often be better qualified to give it than those who are best able to minister to them in other ways.

3. The last object at which we may aim in visiting the poor is one which such visiting not only may satisfactorily accomplish, but can scarcely fail in some degree to bring about; and when regard is had not only to the importance, but to the practicability, of the three objects of which I have spoken, it appears to me to be the one which should be chiefly kept in view. Indeed I believe it to afford the one effectual justification of the practice of systematic visiting. This object is the establishment of a medium of communication between different classes of society. District visiting is but one of many such media, but it has special advantages, as well as some special drawbacks. In no other way are ladies likely to learn so

much of the circumstances of their poorer neighbours in their own homes as by systematic visiting; and no relations of business or accident can give the poor the same pledge of the kindly interest in their welfare as a class which is felt by those who are better off. I can see no danger in any efforts to promote this object, though there are some difficulties in fully attaining it. Among all the failures and perplexities which beset every attempt to confer favours, a visitor may at least enjoy the solid unfailing satisfaction of knowing that she is certainly gaining information, and unmistakeably testifying goodwill by her visits. The more keenly she feels the pain of witnessing distress, and the difficulties which are inherent in every attempt to relieve it, the more competent will she be to represent that distress, and to interpret those difficulties, to those who have really the power of taking effectual measures for their removal or diminution. The most important aspect of the work of ladies as visitors of the poor in short seems to me to be that of links between the poor and the men by whom the country is governed. They should consider themselves as occupying a position analogous to that of an attorney, whose business it is to investigate the affairs of his client, and to instruct counsel on his behalf. Men who are engaged in political or professional affairs often cannot spare time for making acquaintance with the daily life of the poor in their own persons, but through their wives, sisters, and daughters they may learn much which will both incline them to espouse the cause of the poor, and guide their judgment as to the remedies which can be applied by wise legislation and otherwise to many of their sufferings. The growth of interest and activity in the improvement of workhouses is an illustration of this. Those efforts which seem to promise so much real reform in this direction have been largely prompted and directed, if not altogether originated, by the influence of ladies who first visited them from simple benevolence. In short public opinion, which is the most powerful of allies, is very largely formed and guided, especially as regards all social matters, by women. I do not see how ladies can do the poor a better service than by first making themselves as intimately acquainted as may be with

their circumstances, and then using on their behalf the enormous influence possessed by themselves over their own male relatives and friends, and so collectively over the nation at large. This influence is inevitably, and often none the less effectually because unconsciously, used by every woman living in her own family, and spending part of her time in visiting the poor.

The chief drawback to the advantages on this ground of systematic visiting of the poor by ladies is in the more or less artificial character of the intercourse to which it gives rise. No one who has had business relations of any sort with poor people can have carefully observed their behaviour under such circumstances, and compared it with that which is common to them when receiving visits of charity, without being struck by the comparatively conventional and inexpressive, if not positively insincere, manner which is assumed, though no doubt generally quite unconsciously, on the latter occasions. I do not think this conventional manner can be altogether got rid of, but a good deal may be done to break through it by tact and heartiness; and it is perhaps not a very serious impediment to mutual understanding where that is not for other reasons impossible.

The principal qualities needed for successfully performing the work of systematic visiting appear to me to be a real desire to be useful, combined with willingness to learn how one's services can be acceptably rendered; a clear head and considerable experience, *i.e.* not only practice in visiting the poor, but experience of life on one's own account; and that wisdom which results from wide views of things—from the habit of taking into account past and future as well as present time, and remote as well as immediate interests. A woman in whom religion was wanting might undoubtedly possess these qualities; and no one probably would deny that she might be as useful to the poor as the most religious visitor in everything except in giving religious instruction or sympathy. For no one supposes the office of district visitor to be one of any special temptation, and it is one which would scarcely ever be undertaken except from motives of benevolence. In this work religion cannot be said to be needed as a guarantee for fidelity.

The question how far it may be desirable to employ religious organizations in it, in order that the services rendered may be used as an instrument for promoting the spiritual welfare of the persons visited, will, as I have already said, be discussed in a future chapter.

What I have hitherto said refers only to the ordinary routine of systematic visiting. I am of course well aware that the benevolence of the rich has devised countless other forms of assistance for the benefit of the poor; but either these other institutions fall more or less under one of the three general heads of teaching, nursing, and relief, or they are more or less exceptional. In either case most of what has already been said will apply to them, and it would answer no good purpose to attempt a separate inquiry into each of them, even were it possible to enumerate them. There is, however, one of these forms of charity which seems to require a few words—*i.e.* penitentiaries and kindred institutions. This is a branch of the service of the poor, because though the evil which they are intended to meet is unhappily not confined to any class, yet from circumstances the women who avail themselves of their shelter belong almost entirely to the lower classes. The management of such institutions is a work which peculiarly demands those gifts of faith, hope, and charity which naturally spring from true religious feeling and principle. It also is so full of difficulties and dangers that it especially calls for wisdom, experience, tact, and flexibility of mind. Above all, those who engage in it ought to be in a state of mental health and vigour which can hardly be maintained in such work without support and sympathy from without. This healthiness of mind is especially needed here, both because it must be so severely taxed by the painful nature of the work, and because the contagion of moral health and purity is the most powerful medicine for sick minds. It would seem to be work for which married women without young children would be peculiarly qualified, both by experience and position. Whether the members of religious communities are likely to enjoy equal or greater advantages in either respect is a question which cannot be discussed without anticipating the inquiry

of the next chapter into the effect of such institutions upon their individual members.

I have hitherto been speaking of the personal qualities needed for the service of the poor. I must conclude with a few words about the advantages and disadvantages of charitable associations, whether religious or secular, as compared with the independent action of individuals. I shall not here say anything about the organization needed for nursing or teaching, because these are not necessarily or exclusively charitable undertakings. I shall, therefore, reserve the consideration of the best arrangements with regard to them for a future chapter, when I propose to consider the interests of all the classes concerned. At present I shall only speak of what belongs to the administration of relief, or systematic visiting of the poor as such.

There is a sort of rough division, which seems to be generally and increasingly recognized, between the ordinary relief of every-day distress, of which parish allowances are the type, and which ought as much as possible to be administered upon some uniform plan by people occupying some more or less official position ; and those occasional or extraordinary outlays for which no general rule can be laid down, and which can only be ventured upon by individuals acting in a private capacity. Their conduct raises no precedent, while, being guided by special acquaintance with the circumstances of the person assisted, it may serve as an experiment for testing modes of action which may eventually be adopted into the more systematic procedure of official assistance. It thus appears that there are two kinds of systematic visiting, one official, the other essentially amateur. Most people seem to agree that the first is a necessary evil, whose great object ought to be a suicidal one. It is, however, at present, and will probably long continue to be, necessary to have overseers of the poor and relieving officers, or some such machinery of relief. I believe that those who best understand the subject think that women, as well as men, ought to be officially employed in this capacity, as the Sisters of Charity are employed by the "Bureaux de Bienfaisance" in Paris. It is certainly work for which women are

in many ways peculiarly well qualified. If they are likely to err sometimes on the side of leniency, or irregularity in giving relief, they are also particularly sharp-sighted in detecting imposition in trifling matters, especially as practised by women; and there are many cases in which the same sharp-sightedness and the freemasonry of their sex might be turned to a pleasanter account in enabling them to get to the bottom of domestic troubles, and find out how to help, in a way which is scarcely possible for men. I do not, however, at all mean that female relieving officers should be exclusively employed; only that it is worth considering how far their services might be advantageously combined with those of men in this capacity. It would be easy, if it were thought desirable, to establish homes for these women in their respective districts; and a central home for all London, to which they might go when necessary for rest, and where a superintendent might live, who would receive applications from women wishing to be thus employed, and perhaps have a reserve for special services. But the work of relief is sufficiently steady and calculable beforehand to render any such arrangement probably superfluous, except perhaps a kind of registration office. The Sisters who are employed in this way in Paris live at the "Maisons de Secours," provided by the "Assistance publique" in each arrondissement; and though they retain their connection with the "Maison Mère," and are still under the authority of the Superior General, it does not appear that there is any great advantage to the work in this arrangement. If there be any, it would be attained, as far as organization goes, by such a central home as I have mentioned. Such work as this (apart from any ulterior religious object) might be equally well done by members of a secular association, or of a sisterhood, or by individuals separately appointed by the poor-law authorities; but, in either case, it is distinctly professional and not amateur work. And in considering whether it should be entrusted to religious or secular agencies, it should be remembered that the great danger of all professional visiting of the poor is its tendency to lessen self-dependence if the principal object be pecuniary, and to promote insincerity if it be spiritual; and that these dangers reach the highest

point when the two objects are combined. The temptation to adopt a religious phraseology, not prompted by any spontaneous religious feeling, which is naturally caused by the mere presence of a person wearing the outward livery of religion, becomes almost overpowering when that person is also the dispenser of relief.

The other kind of visiting of which I have spoken, so far from being a necessary evil, which ought to aim at its own extinction, is in itself most desirable, and would continue to be so, were distress altogether unknown and relief unthought of. It is that non-official intercourse, in which the idea of giving relief is quite subordinate to that of cultivating friendly relations between individuals, and between different classes, and in which, where assistance is accidentally needed, private benevolence can venture upon occasional efforts of a more or less experimental kind, without fear of creating inconvenient precedents. This is essentially work for amateurs, and is therefore quite out of the reach of any organized body, and as such of any religious sisterhood. A woman who goes out to visit, wearing the uniform of a religious order, will never be regarded by the poor as testifying mere individual human friendship, whether they consider her as a messenger of Heaven, or (which is perhaps more probable) as a representative of the clergy. Her goodwill is referred to professional motives, and interpreted in a way which often does her real injustice; but still the common effect on the minds of the poor seems to be what one sometimes hears said of the work of a Sister of Charity in Paris, "c'est son métier." I do not say that benevolence thus interpreted produces no good effect on the minds of the poor. It may produce a special and, for aught I can assume at present, a much more important good effect than that of testifying individual friendship and goodwill in disregard of social differences. I only say this particular testimony is reserved for the women who really do visit the poor on the footing of friends and neighbours, not of spiritual teachers. And not only do amateurs testify goodwill to the poor by their visits, in a way which professional visiting can never effect, but the object which I have above spoken of as being, in my judgment, the

most important object of all systematic visiting of the poor, is one which none but amateurs are in a position to bring about. The office of interpreter and mediator between rich and poor can be occupied only by those who are in real relations of intimacy with both. A woman who cuts herself off from the society to which she naturally belongs, and devotes herself exclusively to the service of the poor, goes to that service maimed, as it were, of her right hand, deprived of the most powerful instrument with which she can ever hope to help them in this world—her influence with her own family and friends. It is only by retaining her natural position, and dividing her time between the rich and the poor, that she can really be a link between them. I am not attempting here to weigh the advantages which a woman resigns in joining a sisterhood against those which she may gain by it; but I do say that one of the advantages she must almost entirely resign in doing so is that of becoming a living link between the rich and the poor.

CHAPTER II.

THE INTERESTS OF CHARITABLE WOMEN.

THE motives which induce women to enter religious sisterhoods are so complex, and the action of some of them is so unconscious, that it is not quite easy to give a full account of them which shall be recognized as true by those whom it concerns. From a solid basis of tangible reasonable attractions there has sprung up a confused luxuriance of associated charms whose ramifications can be fully traced only by sympathy, and which, though of course ultimately depending for their support upon the solid foundation of reasonable considerations beneath them, have yet independent vitality enough so to disguise the nature of those considerations as to prevent our conduct from being always visibly and immediately determined by them.

Perhaps the best plan will be to give a slight sketch of what I believe to be the usual history of a resolution to enter a sisterhood, before analysing the various motives which have combined to produce it, and the consequences which will probably follow upon the step when taken. The desire to be useful to the poor, which is the most obvious as well as the most amiable motive for becoming a Sister of Charity, is constantly stimulated by the detailed descriptions of their sufferings which meet us in these days at every turn in periodical literature and in appeals for help. These descriptions are alternately causes and effects of the manifold devices of charitable effort with which this country is now swarming. It is no wonder if such accounts falling upon the rich fallow ground of the minds of young women, susceptible from education, living in almost compulsory leisure, and more or less consciously hungering after fuller exercise for their affections,

should produce a crop of hasty enthusiasm for charity, which may be reaped by whoever cares to use it, and of which the promoters of religious sisterhoods seem to have thoroughly appreciated the value. No one can wonder that warm-hearted, high-spirited girls, feeling their own lot to be even oppressively luxurious, should long to give of their abundance to the poor around them, who, they are told, are starving for want of it. No one need wonder, either, when several sisters are living together in a home of which all the work is done without their help, and in a circle of equally well provided neighbours, if some of them should be tempted to feel as if their lives as well as their money were part of the superfluity which seems to them to be owed as a debt to the poor. And if such feelings pass into action, and a young woman tries the experiment of systematic visiting of the poor as an amateur, she is met, under the most favourable circumstances, by all the difficulties and perplexities of which I have already tried to give some account, while the actual sight of distress burns into her mind the desire to go on working for its relief. The natural result is that she turns for guidance to those whom she thinks most capable of giving it; and at first sight what more natural than to suppose that the members of a charitable sisterhood are the best of guides in the work to which they have devoted their lives? The vastness of the field of distress which is open to her also impresses her imagination, and makes her feel that the mere fragments of time which young ladies can spare from home engagements are ridiculously inadequate to the supply of such wants as those by which she is surrounded, and which seem to throw a shade of guilt over all the luxuries of her life. The spectacle of a band of women uniting together to devote themselves wholly to the work of relieving distress, and renouncing the luxuries which, to a mind fresh from the contemplation of misery, often seem wickedly selfish, is impressive and attractive enough to win her enthusiastic admiration and sympathy; and if anything be wanting to complete the charm, it is generally found in the real or apparent unfairness of those who are opposed to them. Thus the original desire for assistance in the endeavour to be useful to the poor soon merges into passionate parti-

sanship, and the work receives a reflected glory from admiration of the sisters, as the sisters were loved and admired originally for the sake of their work. What can be more natural than to ascribe to worldliness and coldness of heart the opposition which any purpose of joining such a body is likely to provoke, and what more stimulating than the idea of braving the opposition of the world in order to devote oneself to a noble and sacred cause?

I cannot wonder at the longing to join a religious sisterhood which is secretly cherished by many young women. There are cases in which it is difficult to say whether the impulse of self-devotion which prompts that longing, or the sense of duty by which it is restrained, is most deserving of our respect and sympathy. The one piece of advice which may fairly be pressed upon all women who are thus, as it were, poised between two strong attractions, is that they would spend some of the leisure so forced upon them in seriously considering what it is they want, and what they are likely to gain by the step in question, as well as what is the necessary price to be paid for it. To help them in such a deliberation is one of my great objects in this inquiry. Another is to show what are the attractions with which home life and secular institutions have to compete, if they would not allow sisterhoods to outbid them in attracting the services of charitable women.

In making this inquiry we must remember that charitable women have at least five courses to choose from, of which joining a religious community is but one, and that we must compare the advantages offered by such communities, not only with home life, but with other associations, whether of life or of work. The five courses among which women practically have to choose are as follows:—

1. Living at home and working independently.

2. Living at home and working as a member of some secular association; *e.g.* as superintendent of a district nurse.

3. Living at home and working as a member of some religious association; *e.g.* as a Tertiarian or "associate sister."

4. Going to live in a secular institution; *e.g.* as nurse or superintendent in a hospital or training school.

5. Going to live in a religious community.

It is obvious that there may be many attractions in associated work, and in the life of a community or institution, which are essentially independent of the religious element in organization with which they are accidentally and very commonly connected.

The proper course for those who think that religious considerations ought not to be introduced into the organization of charitable associations is to promote the formation of associations from which they shall be omitted, and not to undervalue the principle of association and organization for charitable purposes, as is often done by those who attack sisterhoods. Deprive religious associations of the monopoly of careful and attractive charitable organization, and you will deprive them of their principal attraction for the most reasonable women.

It must also be remembered that a woman may be driven as well as drawn into entering an institution, whether secular or religious. We are all but too familiar with instances in which either want of sympathy, want of occupation, or want of liberty, or else simple incompatibility of temper, or other accidental circumstances, make it difficult for the daughters of a family to be thoroughly contented with their home life; and it sometimes happens that the public opinion of their own circle would oppose fewer obstacles to their leaving home for a sisterhood, than to their doing so in any other way.

In considering the reasonable attractions which draw women into sisterhoods then, I shall endeavour to distinguish between those which are essentially, and those which are only accidentally, associated with religious organization. I believe that the objects which most women hope to secure by entering a sisterhood are training, protection, and authoritative direction in work of a kind which shall supply food for the affections, while promoting the salvation of souls and the glory of God.

Let us consider each of these objects separately.

I. The desire for training is so obviously legitimate and even praiseworthy, that the only question which can be raised upon it is as to the thoroughness of the training afforded by sisterhoods, as compared with that which may be obtained in secular institutions. Now the power which any institution

possesses of affording thorough training must of course depend upon the degree in which it is established and employed in any country, and this obviously depends upon the number of the women who join it, so that the question whether women ought to enter sisterhoods for the sake of training tends rather to run in a circle, and must be answered chiefly by a reference to other considerations. I have shown, I think conclusively (Part I. Chap. vii.), upon the authority of Miss Nightingale and M. Husson, that in the case of hospital nursing, when the comparison is made between Paris and London, where the two systems are respectively in possession of the field, there is no very decided advantage as to mere technical skill on either side. It is indeed impossible that religious differences should exert any perceptible influence on success in acquiring an art of which the results are purely physical, except in so far as they tend to produce a slight difference in the degree of importance which is attached to those physical results. The fact that to save life is the ultimate object of secular institutions for training nurses tends in some degree to heighten the eagerness for success in that object among secular nurses, as compared with that which is felt by women who are trained to regard the preservation of life as a matter of secondary importance. Whether it ought to be so regarded is a question upon which I cannot enter at present. The influence of this difference of feeling upon the degree of technical skill which a woman is likely to attain under its action is however scarcely strong enough to affect the conclusion at which we must arrive on every other ground, that first-rate training in nursing may be obtained from whatever association is employed by the principal hospitals, and that the question what kind of association ought to be so employed must therefore depend upon other considerations than those of technical proficiency. And so with regard to all other works of charity. Technical proficiency cannot precede, but will naturally result from, possession of the field of practice. The responsibility which is thus thrown upon the managers of public institutions in deciding which of the two systems they will encourage by employing it in their service, and to whose hands they will entrust this formidable weapon,

namely, the power of offering the most thorough training, will I trust appear more clearly in the next chapter.

II. Perhaps a yet stronger attraction is the prospect offered by sisterhoods of protection—protection against conflicting claims and hindrances, and against one's own weakness and irresolution, as well as in the more obvious and tangible form of protection against outward dangers and annoyances. This protection against oneself and against other claims is afforded in a greater or less degree by any definite engagement entered into with others, whether its terms be a vow, a promise, or a salary. One of the great difficulties and troubles besetting all amateur work, especially works of charity, is the want of some effectual stamp of duty, which shall be recognized by others as impressing such employments with their due degree of importance. A girl living at home is often surrounded by friends and relations who take little or no interest in her attempts at working for the poor, even if they are not annoyed by them. It is not only very difficult, but scarcely becoming, for her to assert the importance of her own voluntary undertakings; and yet the thoughtlessness of others in making demands upon her time often reduces her to the necessity of doing so, if she would not have all her strength frittered away upon trifles which she rightly feels to be altogether unworthy of her energies. Even in one's own mind it is very difficult to adjust such conflicting claims as those of poverty on the one hand, and relationship on the other—very painful to assert engagements to the poor as a reason for withdrawing from domestic or social meetings; modesty and sincerity alike shrink from appearing to attach more importance to one's own wretched dabblings in charity than others are willing to concede to them; and yet there is a sense of sacredness about the obligation not to disappoint the expectations we have ourselves raised in those whose poverty makes them to some extent really dependent upon us, which makes it impossible to be easy in throwing aside arrangements for their benefit whenever they may happen to clash with engagements of mere pleasure. Such conflicts can never arise in a life planned altogether with reference to works of charity, and only those who have suffered

from them can know how alluring is the prospect of escape. To be torn in two directions by the attempt to carry on two different undertakings, or to fulfil two different sets of relations at once, almost doubles the fatigue of each; and from such distractions of mind sisterhoods, like all other recognized professions and institutions, whether secular or religious, offer effectual protection.

The protection from trifling interruptions to business which is afforded by the life of any well-organized institution is a real help, and one which up to a certain point women have, I think, a right to demand as one of the conditions of their devoting themselves to the public service. There is, however, of course, a difference between the utmost seclusion attainable in a secular institution, and that which exists in religious communities, where intercourse even with the nearest relations is sometimes forbidden, sometimes dependent upon the permission of the superior, and in all, whether Protestant or Catholic, so far as I know, more or less discouraged. The difference is that in secular institutions a certain degree of seclusion is an accidental consequence of the necessary arrangements for doing the work, whereas in religious institutions it is more or less an object in itself, as tending to wean the heart from the world. Claims from without must be more urgent to recall a Sister of Charity from her post than to reach a woman in a secular institution.

External engagements are equally welcome as a protection against one's own weakness and irresolution. Once committed to the life of a sisterhood, a woman need no longer vex herself with questionings about her place and work. She is saved from the fretting of a perpetual reconsideration of the value of her own undertakings. The difficulty then is not so much to go on, as to turn back. Doing work is not half so tiring as perpetually resolving to do it, and a resolution not only taken once for all, but embodied in the adoption of a ready-made outward framework of life, saves as much internal effort as external friction. It is like floating down a stream as compared with walking along the bank; and it is no wonder if more energy is thus set free for the employments which form

the routine of such a life. Many, perhaps most women, feel that, even if they had the abilities necessary for striking out their own work, so much strength would be spent in the continual effort of mere independence, that their powers would not produce nearly so much result in any independent undertaking as they might work out in the beaten and sheltered path of sisterhood life, or indeed of any other institution.

There is also a powerful charm in the prospect of a final settlement of one's destiny which frequently attracts women into sisterhoods, as it notoriously often does into otherwise uncongenial marriages. The time of life at which most women enter sisterhoods, or first begin to cherish a desire to do so, is one at which the natural desire for a permanent point of attachment is strongest, and is often intensified by circumstances into a vehement though transient sense of imperative need. Up to a certain point relief from irresolution, from the distractions of home life, and from claims upon one's time or affections to which one cannot worthily yield, may be obtained by any decisive engagement, whether it be contracted with an individual, or with a secular or religious institution. But religious institutions certainly carry this kind of protection further than can be done by any secular institutions, or by any voluntary connection except that of marriage; for they invest the fact of continuance in the work with the idea of fidelity to a sacred cause, and thus bind not only the energies, but the conscience to their service. It is impossible that the vow, or the solemn consecration which in some Protestant sisterhoods replaces the vow distinctly so called, should not exercise a stronger influence in forbidding change of mind than any engagement entered into in the ordinary way of friendship or business. I know that the directors of Protestant sisterhoods continually claim the merit of leaving their members entirely free because they have "no vows." While giving them credit for perfect sincerity in making this claim, I am obliged to disagree as to the fact. Roman Catholic directors often make precisely the same claim, on the ground that in many orders, especially in almost all the active orders, the vows are (as I have shown in the case of the Sisters of St. Vincent de

Paule) only from year to year, and that a dispensation even from these may be obtained upon sufficient grounds; while almost every Protestant sisterhood demands an engagement for some fixed period. At Kaiserswerth this engagement is taken for five years, and every deaconess before her consecration declares her intention of devoting her whole life to the work. The difference surely is not between Catholic and Protestant forms of entrance upon "the religious life," but between the views entertained of "the religious life" itself by those who do and those who do not recognize it as identical with any ecclesiastical organization; between the view which regards the service of the poor as a religious condition, the entrance upon which is fitly marked by a solemn self-dedication and consecration from the Church, and that which regards it as a profession to be entered upon and regulated according to the considerations by which other professions are chosen and conducted. It is idle to say that a "vow" is more binding than a solemn promise made in church, and followed by the imposition of hands and ecclesiastical benediction. What is really binding is the belief that the profession thus entered upon is in a special manner the service of God. Where that belief exists vows are as superfluous as they would be profane without it. To join a society which is based upon that belief, and where every detail of daily life, and all the contagion of constant intercourse, are so arranged as to strengthen that belief, is to take the strongest possible means of binding one's own soul to perseverance. It is such a protection against oneself as no secular profession or institution can possibly afford, and as no one can be justified in giving or in seeking, who is not deliberately and fully convinced that the belief in question is true. I cannot here entertain the question of its truth, but I unhesitatingly assert the paramount force of its influence.

With regard to the more external form of protection—protection from the dangers and annoyances to be encountered in the service of the poor—the way in which it acts in favour of sisterhoods deserves careful attention. The idea is attractive almost in proportion to the refinement of the workers and the roughness of the work. I say almost, not entirely, because

refinement is itself a protection from many of the dangers and annoyances in question; but, on the other hand, it no doubt quickens the apprehension of them, and thus enhances the attractiveness of the shelter offered by sisterhoods. The mere protection from annoyance afforded in working among the poor in bad neighbourhoods by the dress of a religious order may, to a considerable if not quite equal extent, be obtained by the adoption of any kind of uniform, or outward token of real business. I do not think that ladies who wish to be useful to the poor really feel the need of this sort of protection very frequently or very strongly, though it is often put forward in argument; but what they do care for in sisterhood life in this respect is the guarantee which it is supposed to afford as to the character and manners of their associates in work. A lady who wishes to be trained and employed in nursing, in school-teaching, or in visiting the poor, naturally prefers being trained with other ladies in an institution where nobody is supposed to be working for payment, and where she may presume upon a certain similarity in tastes and habits, to taking her chance among the ordinary pupils in a secular institution. It is one thing to wash the feet of the poor in good company, and quite another, and to many ladies a much more trying thing, to take an undistinguished place side by side with one's social inferiors: for instance, to travel third class, not in the dress of a Sister of Charity, but in that of an ordinary third-class passenger; or to sit down to meals with paid nurses in an ordinary hospital. I am far from saying that there is anything unreasonable or inconsistent with the truest benevolence in this preference for the society of people in one's own rank of life. I think it forms one of the legitimate attractions of religious associations, but its connection with religion certainly appears to me to be rather accidental than essential. It is to be observed also that the comparatively high social level which accidentally belongs to sisterhood life as it exists at present in England, and in some Roman Catholic orders, cannot be preserved except by a kind of exclusiveness which would be inconsistent both with the spirit of religion, and with any wide popularity. This subject of the social position from which

religious orders are recruited, and that which is assigned to their members, is a very curious and important one, and one on which it is for obvious reasons extremely difficult to arrive at any definite statistical information. I have made what inquiries I could on this subject at Paris; resulting in the general impression, which, however, I state under correction, that the women who form the bulk of the great charitable orders there are mostly of about the rank of domestic servants, though I am quite aware that there are individual exceptions, and that there are some of these orders (that of St. Vincent de Paule for one) in which the general level is somewhat higher. I ascertained, for instance, that the reading and writing of the sisters employed in the hospitals, and even in schools, were often very imperfect. I have also been told, though I have no means of verifying this, that the general social level of the sisters in Paris is higher than that of those employed in the provinces. Dr. Howson says that "at Kaiserswerth the preponderating number" of deaconesses "are from the social grade from which domestic servants are obtained."[1] However this may be, it is obvious that any arrangement which should exclude women of a low social class from sisterhoods must considerably restrict their numbers, and deprive the association of most valuable helpers in all kinds of physically laborious work; and, therefore, I think we may fairly conclude that, if the system ever spreads in England as it has done in Roman Catholic countries, the prospect of associating exclusively with ladies will no longer be among the attractions of sisterhood life. But it does not follow that a certain rise in social position will not be, as I believe it is in France, one of its attractions to women of a lower class.

The social position of a Sister of Charity is not easy to define, especially because the rules of most, if not all, orders forbid their members to accept hospitality, or to enter into any social intercourse, except in the way of their vocation. They are thus fenced off as it were from any social competition, and occupy a sort of rank apart, which, while it by no means deprives an educated lady of her natural claim to deference in

[1] "Deaconesses," p. 88.

any society which she may have occasion to enter, and does not even always obliterate the traces of the worldly rank which she may be known to have laid aside, certainly raises a woman of low birth above any risk of being treated with disrespect, or reminded of her former want of position. The dress of a religious order, like that of a clergyman, in short, may raise, but cannot lower, the social standing of those who adopt it.

In like manner the absence of direct payment, which is the rule in sisterhood life, is a real guarantee of disinterestedness so long, and only so long, as admission is restricted to women who possess some independent means. The moment you admit those who have their bread to earn, the indirect payment given by all sisterhoods begins to exercise its inevitable and perfectly legitimate attraction. Board, lodging, clothing, pocket money, and a perfectly secure provision for life, to be forfeited only by gross misconduct, is surely very fair payment for the work done by nurses and school-teachers. Domestic servants and secular hospital nurses must serve a long time before they can lay by enough to secure such a provision for the future as is gained at once by joining a religious order; and if they sometimes have the opportunity of gaining more than is necessary for this purpose, all the risks of illness and accident must, on the other hand, be set against this chance of profit.

Thus the social and pecuniary arrangements of sisterhoods attract different women in different ways; ladies do not lose caste, and women of lower position may rise in social standing by joining them; while women of independent fortune are attracted by the fiction of all services being unpaid, and poor women by the fact of their receiving good though indirect payment. I know that wherever one rule about payment is to be made to apply to people in very various pecuniary circumstances, there must be a fiction somewhere. Either some members must accept a nominal salary while really working gratuitously, or else some members must be really paid while nominally working gratuitously. Fictions are not necessarily dishonest (though it must be owned that they are apt to become useless when they cease to deceive), and I am quite aware that the directors of sisterhoods fully admit in words the

fact that they do give indirect payment. But surely of the two fictions I have mentioned, that by which some who really give appear to sell their services is far less dangerous, and indeed less fictitious, than that by which some who really sell appear to give them; for a salary is a real thing, however inadequate as remuneration, and there is no danger of its insignificance being so disguised as to deceive the person who receives it; but the fiction of gratuitousness is founded upon nothing more real than the difference between money and money's worth, and it is a fiction which almost inevitably tends to make nominally unpaid workers deceive themselves, and take credit for a disinterestedness which they do not possess. I cannot help thinking that there is an unconscious dishonesty about this arrangement, which is characteristic of a system whose foundation is aspiration rather than fact, and typical of the indiscriminate claim to the credit of self-sacrifice put forward on behalf of Sisters of Charity as a body in more important things, without inquiry, or in spite of evidence, as to the balance of loss and gain involved in their position. It is necessary to dwell a little upon this divergence between the name and the reality as regards payment, because the plea of disinterestedness is so constantly put forward as a sufficient guarantee for the excellence of the motives and character of all the members of these nominally unpaid bodies; and discredit is thrown by comparison upon secular nurses and others working simply, and without pretending to any merit, for honest wages; such women are called mercenary and hirelings, and we are asked how we can expect devoted service from those whose object is to gain money. I say, in the first place, that if earning one's living were incompatible with self-devotion, there would be but little self-devotion in the great mass of the charitable orders, for I believe ninety-nine out of a hundred of their members to be honestly earning their living; and, secondly, that it is a fallacy whose injuriousness is partially redeemed only by its transparency, to confound the conditions of any service with the motives of those who belong to it. If all paid service were necessarily done for the sake of the pay, what

must we think of our soldiers and sailors, our professional men and civil servants, and the whole body of our clergy? are they not all hirelings in precisely the same sense in which a paid nurse is an hireling? and do we ever fail to expect, or are we often deceived in expecting from them, a devotion to the public service to which their salaries bear no kind of proportion? Or to take a closer parallel—consider the case of domestic servants: among them the rule of money payments is invariable and the service rendered varies from the scanty return which may be exacted from the most mercenary to an utter obliteration of self and absorption of heart and mind in the service of a beloved master or mistress and their family, which is all the more beautiful because it is so entirely free from the slightest consciousness of merit; so entirely a matter of course and simple duty in the eyes of those who offer it, that it would be impossible to make some such faithful old servants understand that there was anything admirable in their conduct. The more shame for us who have received such priceless service if we also fail to recognize its beauty simply because we have paid them a salary the while. That salary has been the safeguard of their simplicity and humility, and it would be difficult to find, I do not say the same substantial virtues, but the same perfect bloom of unconsciousness, in any ostensibly unpaid service. To suppose that love and faithfulness can be impaired by money is just the same worldly-minded and simoniacal error as to suppose that they can be bought by it; but unfortunately their beauty, if not their substance, may be seriously impaired by the ostentation, even though well founded, of disinterestedness.

III. I have said that besides training, and protection during training and subsequent work, women seek in sisterhoods for authoritative direction. One of the great differences between religious associations and such secular charitable institutions as we have in England is the degree in which they undertake not only to train and employ those who offer themselves, but to choose for them the particular kind of work upon which they shall be employed. Many women wish to devote themselves to "good works" in general without having any distinct pre-

ference for any particular branch, and feel it a great relief to have the question between nursing, teaching, and visiting settled for them. In Roman Catholic countries, where the system of charitable sisterhoods has been so long established that a thorough division of labour has been effected, it is true that a woman may often, if she wishes it, choose her own employment with comparative certainty beforehand by entering an order devoted to some special work; but in sisterhoods which undertake various kinds of work no candidate would be admitted who was not willing to have her particular employment chosen for her. It is very difficult to ascertain the exact degree of freedom of choice about her work which may remain to a woman after entering any sisterhood. But absolute freedom of choice is almost incompatible with the idea of spiritual authority. At Kaiserswerth, for instance, I was told that although a woman may offer herself either as a teaching or a nursing sister, and her choice will be always as much as possible respected, yet that it was contrary to the whole plan of the institution to accept the services of any one who did not feel and show a child-like submission to any contrary decision which might be deemed necessary by her directors. Thus the difference between the general plan of secular and religious institutions as regards training appears to be that in the one it is a commodity which the pupil purchases for her own purposes, and of which of course she chooses the nature accordingly, and makes what subsequent use she judges right; whereas in the other it is part of a system of direction based upon a spiritual tie, and administered by the spiritual superior in such quantities and upon such subjects as he or she sees fit.

Now it is of course open to any woman to say that she cannot judge for herself of the kind of work for which she is best fitted, and that the directors of a charitable institution are likely by long experience to know better than herself how best to turn her gifts to account; and to a certain extent this plea is no doubt founded upon reasonable grounds. It is partly a question between centralized and independent action, and in all such cases there is a balance to be struck between the incompatible advantages of employing a central authority which

can distribute its forces according to a comprehensive view of the general good, and of trusting to the vigorous and invigorating action of personal responsibility. Up to this point it must be observed that the advantages, be they what they may, of centralization, though accidentally to a considerable extent associated with religious institutions, are by no means essentially connected with them. It is a mere question of organization, and a despotism may be purely secular, while spiritual power may be distributed among any number of independent local authorities. The "Assistance publique" of Paris is an instance of secular centralization, and a secular central office for charity in London might conceivably have all the advantages of experience and comprehensiveness of view in the distribution of the services employed by it, which can be attributed to the director of a sisterhood. But the real difference is that the director of a sisterhood undertakes to decide the question of how a woman should be employed, and many other questions, not only from the point of view of general utility, but as between herself and her own conscience. He relieves her from the sense of responsibility, and in exchange for voluntary co-operation asks only for obedience. It is needless to waste words in proving a fact so familiar as the delight which many people, especially women, find in submission to spiritual authority, with its accompanying deliverance from the burden of free will. The degree in which spiritual authority is claimed by the directors of religious associations varies in different institutions, but a sisterhood could scarcely exist quite apart from it, and in all those of whose constitution I have any knowledge it is asserted in uncompromising terms. Whether it is right or wise thus to abdicate the direction of one's own conduct in favour of clerical superiors is a question the answer to which must depend upon our view of the nature of their claims to spiritual authority, and I therefore cannot fully enter into it here. But I may say at once that such abdication is of the essence of religious associations. No secular institution either demands or would accept it; and I may further say that unless it be justified by the real possession of delegated divine authority on the part of the clergy, it is as degrading to the

moral dignity of those who make it, as it is alluring to their weakness.

Hitherto I have been speaking of the reasons which lead women who have chosen the service of the poor as a profession, or at least as a serious occupation, to prefer one kind of association to another as the channel through which to offer their services. We must now go a little deeper, and consider the motives which impel them to undertake that service, the origin as well as the working of self-devotion to the service of the poor, in order that we may enter as fully as possible into the state of mind upon which the attractive influence of sisterhoods is exerted. I have said that what women who enter them chiefly want is help in engaging in work of a kind which affords food for the affections, while promoting the salvation of souls and the glory of God. The last object is one to which I cannot here do more than briefly refer. The assumptions which it involves are of too grave a nature to be mixed up with the more superficial questions of temporal utility with which we are at present engaged. But it must always be borne in mind as underlying them all in the minds of the women whose interests we are considering. The desire to save souls acts powerfully as a motive for many proceedings of which the connection with that object is but dimly perceived, but which are habitually associated with it in imagination. It attains its full force long before the mind has arrived at any mature convictions regarding the adequacy of the means proposed. Indeed the overwhelming importance of the end in view has a direct tendency to occupy the imagination to the exclusion of any inquiry into its relation to the means, and even to produce a reluctance to enter upon any such inquiry, and a certain more or less conscious disapprobation of those who attempt to do so. It is, however, precisely because I recognize the spiritual objects aimed at by religious institutions as being of such magnitude and weight, that in comparison of them all earthly interests are mere dust in the balance, that I hold all whom it concerns to be bound by the most sacred obligation to search out and test to the uttermost the nature of the belief respecting God's dealings with man upon which religious orders are founded,

before they dare to enlist themselves upon either side. In the last chapter of this book I shall contribute what I can to such an inquiry. At present we are concerned with the force of the impulse in question, not with its justification. The most familiar experience proves its occasionally overwhelming force, and I believe that in a milder degree it influences the habitual feeling of women, especially of young women whose lives are not fully occupied, to a degree which busy men can scarcely understand. It is no doubt the strongest, though by no means the most prominent, of all the feelings through which women are drawn into sisterhoods.

The way in which religious associations attract women through the affections is however quite within the scope of our present inquiry. It is indeed almost the keystone of the whole system, and deserves our most serious consideration. It acts in two ways—or rather its strength is in the combination which sisterhood life offers of two things; ready access to the poor, and intimate daily association with other women, the direction of whose sympathies may be counted upon with assurance. Other institutions offer ready access to the poor, and congenial associates may be found elsewhere, but nowhere else can a woman to whom the service of the poor appears, as it does to so many, as a sort of religion, count upon finding a system of life based upon that feeling, and shared with companions who are all likeminded in that respect. Nowhere else can the lonely and homeless be sure of finding a home in which they will be received so gladly and upon such equal terms; and nowhere else can enthusiastic aspirants after self-sacrifice find such facilities for gratifying their spiritual ambition while withdrawing from the friction of home life, and from the opposition of relations who take perhaps a different view of the value of such self-sacrifice. They may meet with opposition enough to the step itself to give their life a flavour of martyrdom, but they escape once for all from the damping influence of persistent want of conviction in those around them. Now in estimating the balance of loss and gain which is involved in entering a sisterhood, we are met by the same difficulty as there is about payment—that is, that if one

formula is to be made to apply to all the members, there will necessarily be a fiction somewhere, for the loss and gain are very unequally distributed among the various members of such a body. But whatever may be the case with regard to payment, there is certainly no need to use any uniformity of terms with regard to self-sacrifice. It is often done, and the result is, as I believe, to spread a most mischievous delusion. Instead of doing so, we will freely distinguish between the cases of those who do, and those who do not, give up a happy home life to join a religious association.

The desolate waifs and strays of society who join a sisterhood for the sake of a home seem to me to be entitled to all our tenderness and consideration, though not to any particular admiration for taking advantage of so happy an opportunity. Indeed, it is as offering a home to the homeless that sisterhoods seem to me to have the strongest claim upon our sympathy. Women who are no longer likely to marry, who have no prospect of forming fresh ties to replace those they have lost and are daily losing, and not sufficient abilities to occupy any important post, are in so forlorn a position, even if they have money enough to live in comfort alone, that it is difficult to find the heart to grudge them such a resource as sisterhoods have it in their power to offer. Such an "honourable asylum" for single women as is provided by the Flemish Béguinages seems to have great merits in this point of view; and the inmates would at least not be more useless to the poor in such an asylum than they are while scattered singly over the country. In some cases of course they might be extremely useful, but unfortunately it rarely happens that the homeless and forlorn are very efficient people. In such a struggling world as this, capable people are generally pretty soon provided both with homes and with work enough, without having recourse to any association. And though it may seem hard to say so, I think it is dangerous to disguise the desire to gain a home under the name of self-devotion to the service of others. Perhaps too, in the long run, asylums for homeless ladies might prove as demoralizing to the upper classes as workhouses and almshouses are sometimes said to be to the poor. At any rate, I do not think that the pro-

moters of charitable sisterhoods would be at all willing to rest their defence upon any such ground as this; though it should be distinctly recognized as one of their attractions, and, in my judgment, as one of the nearest approaches to a justification of their existence.

It is easier to deal with the case of those who have really something to give up in entering a sisterhood, for they have no such claim upon our compassion, and it is a far less painful and ungracious task to analyse a claim upon admiration and respect, than one upon pity and tenderness. When a woman leaves a happy home to devote her life to the service of the poor in a religious community, what then is the nature of the exchange which she makes; and how far, and upon what grounds, can it be justified?

To answer this question completely it would be necessary to estimate the value of home life and community life respectively with a degree of precision which is impossible in any such general comparison as we are now engaged upon, for homes and communities vary indefinitely among themselves. A further difficulty arises from the impossibility of truly estimating the interests of any individual without reference to the interests of others. "None of us liveth to himself" is perhaps especially true of women, whose lives are almost entirely spent in occupations having an immediate and obvious reference to the service of others. But, as much as possible, I wish here to concentrate attention upon the gain and loss to women themselves in exchanging home life for that of a community, without complicating the question by assumptions about the interests of the poor or of society at large, to which interests the preceding and following chapters are respectively devoted.

And first as to gain—what, it may be asked, does a woman hope for, in entering a sisterhood, who has neither daily bread, social position, nor a home to gain by it? I answer—the opportunity of usefulness in a worthy cause, and the benefit of religious discipline and sympathy. It is surely a great and an excellent thing that women should prefer to spend their lives in doing hard work and rendering real services to those who can make no return except in affection and esteem, to seeking their

own amusement or advancement in life. And surely those who for any cause have ceased to expect to occupy the position which seems to most women the happiest and most natural, of wife and mother, may rightly wish rather to turn that loss to their own profit and the profit of many, by seeking a wider field for the exercise of the conjugal and maternal faculties, than to soothe themselves by picking up such crumbs of domestic life as may be left to them at second-hand by their more fortunate relations. I do not say that the service of the poor is the only worthy object to which a single woman can devote herself, but I do say that it is the only occupation by means of which she can always easily secure full exercise for the domestic affections which either have never had or have lost their natural objects—the only occupation readily accessible to all unmarried women in which the fact that they are unmarried can be used as a means of expanding rather than of cramping their sympathies and their usefulness. I say that in such circumstances a woman can never worthily fill up her life unless she includes the poor in the range of her affections. But it is almost as fatal a mistake to restrict those affections to the poor as to the rich. Surely there should be no respect of classes in the life of one whose isolation from family ties sets her free to bless and be blessed by all who come within the widest possible range of intercourse. Surely the noblest position a lady in such circumstances can hope to occupy is that of a common centre of help and influence for rich and poor, for men and women, for old and young; and a system which sets single women apart for the exclusive service of the poor is to themselves but a poor substitute for domestic life, while it deprives them of much of their influence with society on behalf of the poor, and of almost all their directly beneficial influence on the rich. Thus while heartily recognizing and respecting the impulse to self-devotion to the service of others which supplies one of the strongest motives for joining religious communities, I consider it a serious misfortune that so noble an impulse should be directed into too narrow a channel.

But, it may be said, is it not the very narrowness of the channel which deepens and strengthens the spirit of self-

devotion? Are not sisterhoods to be regarded not only as a contrivance for distributing the services of a certain number of good women, but also as a school in which women may learn goodness?

This question cannot be answered fully without reference to those theological beliefs respecting the nature of spiritual gifts and the conditions of their transmission which I have reserved for examination in a separate chapter. But without entering upon those questions we may form some estimate of the type of character which sisterhood life tends to produce, and of the natural means which are employed for the cultivation of their special ideal; and without doing this we should not at all fully understand the attractive influence of the system upon the imagination of young women. It may perhaps appear presumptuous to attempt to form such an estimate without personal experience of the system. But this is what every woman must do before she can rightly decide whether to join it or not; and it is of the utmost importance that women should form a well-considered opinion upon the principal question by which the whole system must ultimately stand or fall, namely, its effect upon character, before they commit themselves to a step which is at least unlikely to leave them much leisure for subsequent reflection upon the principles by which their life ought to be regulated. For these reasons, and also because no one person's experience could afford sufficient grounds for judging the merits of such a system, the practical question must inevitably be decided chiefly upon *à priori* grounds and from outside.

What then is the ideal which charitable sisterhoods set before their members, and what are the means by which they seek to help them to attain to it? It must be a sluggish imagination and a cold heart which does not recognize the beauty and elevation of the conventual ideal as modified in the active orders. The severest purity, not only of life and manners, but in the inmost recesses of the heart, lit up by the fire of a charity which for ever spends itself in unrequited services to the lowest and most erring, in ministering to whose sufferings an acceptable offering of love and devotion is made to the Saviour for whose sake and in whose name every moment's work is done—this is a picture which may well stir up zeal and,

emulation in Christian hearts. We owe, I believe, a great debt of gratitude to religious orders for the clearness with which they have impressed upon the world's imagination one side of perfection, one beautiful though narrow ideal. But if those who have been brought into a position which enables them to recognize the one-sidedness and the narrowness, as well as the beauty, of that ideal, voluntarily or half-consciously shut their eyes to its defects in order that they may rest in its incomplete beauty, then I believe that what has been a savour of life to others becomes a savour of death to them, and that by their turning away from the sun to worship the brightness of a candle the light that is in them becomes darkness, and great indeed is that darkness. Purity, fervent charity, and single-hearted devotion are not confined to any system, nor, because they have been earnestly preached and honestly sought in one particular path, until they have become identified with it in the popular imagination, does it follow that that path is really the most direct way to the attainment of them. For the sake of those very qualities we are bound to inquire diligently into the means by which different teachers offer to lead us to them.

The great school for these qualities is, I believe, active work for others, and so far no doubt there are ample opportunities for acquiring them in the life of charitable sisterhoods; but this is an advantage which is no more peculiar to them than the air they breathe. They share it with every charitable institution and with every home in the country. What is really peculiar to them is a certain religious discipline, and exclusive association with people who profess agreement in certain religious views. I believe that in the long run these distinctive peculiarities of community life are likely to do far more harm than good. I wholly disbelieve in the professional competence of one human being to discipline the soul of another. I believe that discipline thus administered, including the observance of certain appointed hours of worship, self-examination, and religious meditation under direction, may produce and maintain a certain state of religious feeling, a certain tendency to religious emotion, which, though not necessarily in every individual case injurious, is dangerous when indiscriminately

administered, as it must be by the rules of an institution; and the action of which upon the individuals whom it most readily influences may be unwholesome to the degree of a spiritual poison, and especially dangerous to the very qualities of which we have been speaking. But not only are purity, charity, and devotion to be cultivated by other and, as I believe, by more successful methods outside religious communities, but we must remember that these qualities by no means sum up all that is noble and desirable in womanly character. Justice, truth, courage, public spirit, and all the noble fruits of spiritual freedom may be sacrificed in the too exclusive pursuit of them. The practice of never associating on equal terms with any but people of one's own way of thinking on religious matters is an artificial arrangement for fostering the feeling excited by those beliefs, without any corresponding widening or sifting of the grounds on which they are held. This also is a process which is necessarily unwholesome and often in the highest degree injurious. There may be cases in which for a time it may have a beneficial effect, but as a permanent plan of life, and as a system to be applied indiscriminately to as many pious and enthusiastic women as can be persuaded to adopt it, I cannot but think it singularly dangerous. For pious and enthusiastic women are by nature but too prone to excess of religious emotion upon a narrow and unproved basis of belief. Surely to withdraw such women from all chance of free intercourse with people of cooler heads, and feelings more under the government of reason, is like putting aside the yeast to ferment and spoil by itself, while the bread is left unleavened.

And thus we come to the last subject we have here to consider, namely, the loss which is to be set against such opportunities of usefulness and of religious improvement as may be found in sisterhood life—the nature of the sacrifices involved in it, of which we hear so much.

It has always seemed to me that to speak of the renunciation of mere luxury and amusement which is implied in joining an active charitable association, as demanding any appreciable effort of self-sacrifice, was little better than an insult to the class of women who are capable of being attracted by the noble

objects of that profession. The degree of plainness or even hardness of living which is practised in any of the more rational and busy sisterhoods is really nothing that could cause more than slight temporary uneasiness, probably far less trying than the chafing against the luxuries of home life from which it sets such women free. Of course it is impossible to say from external observation how soon the spirit of asceticism may creep in, and prompt mortifications not involved in the rule or necessary occupations of the association; but, in the communities which really exist for the sake of work, I believe that unnecessary austerities are, for obvious reasons, very generally discouraged. At any rate they are not of the essence of sisterhood life, though I believe that indirectly they are essentially connected with it, through its tendency to foster a state of mind of which they are a natural result. I am now inquiring, however, not into possible mischievous results, but into the necessary price which women must pay for yielding to all the various attractions I have described as drawing them into sisterhood life; and the one necessary price is the breaking of natural ties in exchange for the religious tie thus formed. What is the nature of this sacrifice, and how far does it deserve our admiration or our censure?

The mere name of sacrifice is surrounded with associations of so sacred a kind that the praise of self-sacrifice has a sort of dazzling effect, and is seldom steadily analysed. But the conditions which are necessary to make the fact of sacrifice really a matter for admiration are very simple. Apart from the notion, which can scarcely be justified when plainly stated, though it so largely pervades all ordinary religious feeling, that our suffering is in itself pleasing to our Maker, it will be felt that the only value of sacrifice consists in the proof it affords of our appreciation of the object for which, or the person for whom, it is made. It is in fact only another name for a price paid in suffering; it is justifiable only if the object for which it is paid is really worth the cost, and generous only if the object be purchased for another.

The impressiveness of the sacrifice made in joining a sisterhood, considered as a test of the force of the feeling impelling

to it, will of course vary according to our estimate of the happiness of home life, and this of course varies indefinitely in different homes. I fear there are not a few homes whose daughters can leave them without any very painful sacrifice. But putting it at the highest, taking the case of the happiest possible home life, we shall all agree that to give up such homes as some of us have known must cost a pang for which no human being would have courage, except under the influence of an intensely strong feeling, for the sake of an object felt to be infinitely precious. The fact that such sacrifices are made proves of course that those who make them attach an extremely high value to the object for which they are made, but it proves nothing more. It has no tendency to prove that the object is rightly so valued. And therefore to claim our admiration for sisterhoods on the ground that they involve, in some cases, a very painful sacrifice, is to beg the whole question at issue, which is precisely whether the objects attained by this step are worth what they cost.

And further, even supposing the object gained to be worth what it costs, and the sacrifice therefore to be justifiable, it is yet possible that the transaction may be at best a prudent, perhaps even a selfish one. A price paid in feeling for an equivalent may be as distinctly a good bargain as one paid in money. Yet the fact that such a price is paid for entrance upon the life of sisterhoods is often appealed to as setting a sort of stamp of the supernatural on the whole system by the very people who most earnestly extol the happiness and the spiritual advantages of that state of life. "Nous sommes très heureuses dans notre vie pénible," said a French Sister of Charity to me once, without the smallest apparent consciousness that what she evidently regarded as a paradox to be explained only on semi-miraculous grounds might be received as a statement very probably true, and not at all surprising, that on the whole the balance of loss and gain, as far as enjoyment went, was in her favour. For it must be remembered that even the happiest homes are not in the long run beds of roses. Who is there who would not escape from a multitude of cares, anxieties, and sorrows, as well as lose much happiness, if it were possible

altogether to obliterate family life? People talk as if Sisters of Charity never ceased to pine after the enjoyments they have left, and felt no comfort in their freedom from anxiety, and no pleasure in their work. If this were so, it would I think be equally surprising and discreditable. It is obvious that in reality they make an exchange, in which nobody can quite strike the balance of loss and gain in mere happiness, since no two cases are alike, and no one can tell what life would have been in whichever path is left untried. The fact that so many women choose sisterhood life in preference to family life proves that women set a high value upon the objects for which sisterhoods exist, but it does not prove that these objects are really nobler than those which they renounce.

A worse result than a mere begging the question follows from the thoughtless way in which people constantly speak with admiration of the sacrifice made in leaving home. This is the suggestion which is thus conveyed,—that while the life of a religious community is all self-denying devotion to others, home life is all mere self-indulgent enjoyment. I regard this depreciation of ordinary ties and ordinary duties as a more serious, because a wider-spread, evil result of the false theory upon which religious orders are based than even the unwholesomeness of their own spiritual atmosphere. Those who have no family life to give up make no sacrifice; those who have give up something infinitely more valuable than mere pleasure. Any family life which is worthy of the name is certain to be in the long run a school of discipline far more severe and searching than can be administered through the artificial ties of religious communities. What are any physical hardships, or even any of the sympathetic sufferings usually encountered in ministering to strangers, when compared with the inevitable trials sooner or later shared with and endured for one's own flesh and blood? It is difficult to understand how a woman can renounce the enjoyments of home without renouncing its sorrows: absence and engrossing occupation will shut her out equally from both or from neither. And a system by which women are invited to escape from their share of the discipline of family life seems to me to appeal far

more powerfully to their weakness than to their strength. What is generally described as giving up all the joys of home life may with at least equal truth be described as abandoning the post of honour in the battle of life.

I do not apply this language to the mere fact of leaving home. We are sometimes asked by those who advocate sisterhoods,[1] why it should be thought wrong for a woman to leave her home to become a Sister of Charity, when no objection would be made to her doing so to become a governess. The difference is so palpable that it is almost difficult to believe in the good faith of the question. Who ever pretended that women were never to leave home? or who ever asked a governess to "forsake all earthly ties" in order to devote herself heart and soul to the "blessed vocation" of teaching other people's children? What parents object to in the invitation to their daughters to leave home for a sisterhood is the assertion of a paramount claim—the invitation to form a tie which shall take precedence of all natural ties. As I have already pointed out, it matters little by what forms such an engagement is celebrated, whether there be the outward form of a vow or not, when the claim upon service and self-devotion is made in the name of God; and when it is considered a liberal concession if a woman is allowed occasionally to return to her family in case of their being able to show sufficient cause to satisfy her religious superiors. It is the transference of allegiance, not of bodily presence, which parents and friends resent, and I think with reason. A man leaves his home and family to go to the ends of the earth upon the public service, and no tie is broken by it; the very fact of sharing in such a sacrifice binds the members of a family more closely together: and no doubt where it happens, as in devout Roman Catholic families, that parents and children all agree in recognizing the claims put forward by religious orders as valid, there is a similar partnership in the sacrifice, which prevents the collision between domestic and ecclesiastical claims from occurring, though the transference here still takes place. It does not follow that the domestic claims which are thus waived ought not to prevail if

[1] See Howson's "Deaconesses:" Preface.

the collision did occur, nor that it is right to waive them. To attempt to draw a parallel between leaving home for a sisterhood and leaving it for any purpose which does not involve a transference of allegiance is a confusion which, if not wilful, implies an extraordinary want of reflection.

And in conclusion, if it be, as I believe, wrong thus to transfer one's allegiance, it is a wrong-doing which very surely involves its own punishment, not by altering the balance of pain and pleasure, for that is very doubtful, but by depriving those who commit it of the most precious of all educations, that of daily familiar intercourse with their lay, and especially their male, relations and friends. Every woman who enters a sisterhood cuts herself off from the possibility of any free habitual association with laymen, and thus not only practically debars herself from marriage, whether she is supposed to renounce it or not, but also effectually debars herself from the best of all means of training and strengthening her own mind. For what book learning is to be compared with the intellectual exercise of association with educated men? What training in the world can be so valuable to a woman as the daily intimacy of family life with her father and brothers? And this education is but beginning at the age at which women enter sisterhoods, and its beneficial influence is increasingly felt and increasingly needed with every year of advancing life. It seems to be supposed that women grow up so perfect as to need nothing at 18 or 20 but a novitiate of a year or two to prepare them to act as ministering angels on all occasions, and to enter upon a life of perpetual teaching and perpetual giving out, without any corresponding provision for learning and taking in. But none of us have within ourselves an inexhaustible supply of strength, spirits, or wisdom, and for the very sake of enabling ourselves to give, we are bound to provide for the replenishing of our supplies. We need continual strengthening and refreshment, and whatever may be the efficacy of the religious exercises of a sisterhood, and the help which may be derived from occasional interviews with the director or chaplain (one of whom probably undertakes the guidance of scores of women), there is certainly no natural means of strengthening and refreshment like that of

the daily intercourse of ordinary domestic life with friends and relations of both sexes. Most people seem to agree in this time and country that the life of a monastery from which women are altogether excluded is not likely to be very wholesome, but the narrowing and hardening effect of exclusive association with persons of one's own sex does not seem to be equally fully recognized, and yet surely it is equally inevitable, in the case of women. I am not speaking of a mere sacrifice of enjoyment; I speak of a deliberate abandonment of the most important means of intellectual and moral improvement.

Again, women often think to secure their own religious faith by withdrawing, at whatever sacrifice of feeling, from the society of those who do not share it, and whose influence is supposed to be dangerous in proportion to the affection felt for them. But what can be the value of a faith which will not flourish and spread in the face of such contradiction as this? No doubt one of the most trying circumstances of family life, in these days of change and controversy, arises from differences of religious feeling between near relations. Women, whose religion is far more made up of personal affection than is usually the case with men, often suffer severely from want of sympathy in it, if not from a scepticism which shocks and alarms them, in the men with whom they are most closely connected, and in whose religious state they are most deeply and painfully interested. I believe that the suffering of various kinds arising from this source is one of the circumstances which most strongly impel women to seek relief in the shelter, the active charitable occupation, and the assured religious sympathy of sisterhood life. It is a trial of which I would speak only with the most serious sympathy and respect, but from which I would earnestly entreat women not to flinch. The more strongly we feel the awfulness of the battle between belief and unbelief which is probably but beginning, the more sacredly we are bound not to desert those who are struggling for truth, not to loosen our hold upon those who are exposed to temptations, and who feel the force of difficulties from which we may escape—if we choose to escape alone Instead of hiding from the storm of religious controversy, surely the duty of all believing women is

to stand by those to whom God Himself has bound them by natural ties, and to strive to enlarge their own minds and strengthen their own hearts to hold fast what is true in their faith, without shrinking from any test or any discussion by which it may be purified from its dross. A woman who can keep a firm hold both upon the religion which sustains her own soul, and upon the ties which bind her to those who look at religion from a different but at least as real a point of view, cannot fail to give and to receive such an education as is worth any suffering it may involve, and which is utterly incompatible with the peace and seclusion of sisterhood life. And what is especially true in times and circumstances of unusual religious agitation, is more or less true always and under all circumstances, of the comparison between life in a community and life in "the world." If the life of a community implies a triumph over the love of mere physical luxury and intellectual amusement, it gives but too much encouragement to a cowardly love of what may be called spiritual luxury. There is more faith in trusting our religion to the storms of common life than in flying to the shelter of a system arranged on purpose to foster it by artificial means; and for the sake of our own highest spiritual education, as well as of the help we may give to others, I think our wisdom is to be content to meet life as God made it, and to accept its discipline from His hands alone.

CHAPTER III.

THE PUBLIC GOOD.

HAVING now considered the way in which the question upon which we are engaged specially affects the two classes most immediately concerned, we are in some degree prepared to enter upon the wider inquiry, What is its bearing upon the temporal interests of all classes? how for the sake of the public welfare ought those charitable women who can choose their own path in life to act with regard to the service of the poor?

In considering this question we must endeavour in some degree to strike the balance, already alluded to, between the claims of the poor as a class, and the other demands upon the time and strength of our available force of charitable women, which we are still assuming to be practically limited; as well as to consider the influence which would probably be exercised upon the community at large by the growth among us of a system of religious sisterhoods.

To answer the question of distribution numerically, as between rich and poor, it would be necessary to weigh the interests of the poor against those of the rest of the world, with a degree of precision which it seems hopeless to attempt. We have no scales of sufficient magnitude or exactness for such a purpose; and even if we could do so, there would still be the difficulty of identifying the individuals whose duty it might be to answer the call. We must be content to trust to the impulses of individual benevolence to supply us with volunteers for the service of the poor, and the stream seems to be setting in that direction with a degree of force which makes it almost unnecessary further to urge the claims of the poor upon the

devotion of good women. They are indeed so obvious and so fully done justice to by most of our advisers, that it seems to me more necessary to say a few words upon the rival claims of the rich, and upon the way in which the interests of rich and poor are interwoven, so that any undue exclusiveness of service tends to defeat its own object.

It seems to be sometimes taken for granted that the poor are exposed to every want which is felt by their richer neighbours, with the addition of all those arising from poverty. Now a very little observation will show that if the possession of money satisfies some wants, it originates at least as many others, especially when it has been applied to its best purpose, that of education. It would be truer to say that the rich experience every want which is felt by their poorer neighbours, with the addition of those arising from wealth and leisure.

Some of the wants which are common to rich and poor alike—for instance, the need of food, clothing, and shelter—are, it is true, so easily satisfied by means of money, that we cease to think of them as wants in our own case; but there are other necessities which we share with the poorest, and which cannot always be supplied by money—for instance, care in sickness, attendance in old age and childhood, advice in difficulties, sympathy in sorrow, and all the numberless offices of love and friendship by which the burden of life is made endurable, and in which nearly all its happiness consists; all these wants press at least as heavily upon the rich as upon the poor. And not only do they press as heavily upon those who have all that money can give as they do upon the poorest, but in proportion to the degree in which the mind is enlarged by education, and the accumulated results of education in successive generations, in that proportion precisely does the circumference of the field of feeling, both for pain and pleasure, expand also. No doubt the greater range of interests opens one means of relief from painful impressions by increasing the variety of subjects to which the mind can be directed; but, on the other hand, leisure deprives those who possess it of the most effectual of all mental anodynes, necessary and fatiguing physical exertion. I do not believe that even physically the

rich suffer less than the poor, when the bad effects of luxury are set against those of want, and there can be no doubt that they suffer far more mentally. It is true that they have so many more enjoyments as materially to alter, or at least to give them the power of altering, the balance of mental pain and pleasure. But if the fact of suffering be that which constitutes a claim upon the ministrations of good women, the rich are entitled to such ministrations at least as much as the poor. I have already remarked that the directors of religious orders themselves are so much aware of this that they largely undertake to supply nurses and teachers for rich as well as for poor, rightly saying that money cannot buy the devoted service which is equally needed by children and the sick in every rank of life. A woman, therefore, who is considering where to bestow her sympathy and tenderness will not find them demanded by the poor alone.

But people want help not only in their sufferings, but in their work. And in the wider field of work undertaken by those whose position calls them to labour with their minds rather than their hands, there is a correspondingly wide field for such help as women can give. The co-operation of women is surely especially valuable in those kinds of work which call, not for mere physical strength or manual skill, but for wide and varied observation, for a comprehensive study of the wants of human beings in all sorts of circumstances, in short for the wisdom to which sympathy contributes as largely as reason. Therefore a woman who has time and strength to dispose of should consider well whether she is best qualified to help those who are working with their hands, or those who are working with their brains, before she devotes herself exclusively to the service of either class.

The theory that the noblest work a woman can do is to devote herself to relieving the sufferings of the poor appears to me false and dangerous, not only because it proceeds on the assumption that the sufferings of the poor are greater than those of the rich, but also because it overrates the importance of pain, and attaches an undue value to the mere alleviation of misery. It must be remembered that the relief

of suffering is after all but one of the great objects for which women ought to live, and it is one of those which women are naturally least likely to undervalue. To relieve suffering is no doubt one of the most innocent luxuries of the rich, as well as one of the greatest pleasures a woman can have, but it ought scarcely to be exalted into a virtue. Women are often in some danger of forgetting that sickness and suffering are but one side of life, and by no means the most important part of it; and that they cannot devote themselves with rigid exclusiveness to any one side of life without maiming their own nature, and depriving themselves of a part of their power of usefulness. If it is selfish to ignore sickness and suffering, it is suicidal to ignore health, and strength, and enjoyment. We cannot refuse to share in the ordinary life of people of our own class, and in the ordinary interests and pursuits of the healthy and happy, without isolating ourselves in a way which necessarily and justly deprives us of the power either to influence the happy on behalf of sufferers, or even to help them effectually when their own time of suffering comes. Those from whom we have held aloof through scorn of their prosperity, are not likely to open their hearts to us in a time of trouble. And the influence thus lost is so much power thrown away; power which might have been applied not only in the relief of suffering, but in the purification and elevation of the whole current of ordinary life. The fact that those who refuse to share in the pleasures and daily interests as well as the sufferings of the circle to which they belong, cut themselves off from their place in life and become comparatively powerless in their isolation, is, in my judgment, the only real ground upon which the retention of wealth can be, I do not say morally justified, but reconciled with a generous impatience of unshared luxury. As a mere source of indulgence wealth may be contemptible, and in the presence of such misery as we are surrounded with we may well be disgusted at the useless profusion with which it is so often spent; but the magnanimous use of wealth, in a generous and serious participation in all the mingled elements of which other people's lives are composed, is a source of moral power not to be lightly thrown away. And it must be remembered

that the most important undertakings of life are necessarily carried on by those who are in the vigour of life and of power, and are probably those into which considerations of pain and pleasure enter most remotely. There are opportunities of influence to be shared with the strong which, if it may sometimes be right to sacrifice them for the sake of the weak, ought at least not to be thoughtlessly let slip. Not only the rich as compared with the poor, but the healthy and prosperous as compared with the sick and suffering, have claims upon our time and sympathy, which women in their proneness to exclusive self-devotion and absorption in some one-sided sympathy, especially sympathy for suffering, are but too apt to forget.

The fact is, however, that it is impossible really to serve the poor without helping the rich in one of their most important duties, or really to serve the rich without promoting the best interests of the poor. Every individual woman who is free to dispose of her own time must be guided in the choice of her special occupation by a thousand considerations which cannot be reduced to general rules. Those who are left most entirely without near ties will be happy in falling back upon the never-failing welcome of poverty; those who are most closely bound to the rich have the most influence to use in favour of the poor. I do not pretend to indicate the individuals who are called to the immediate service of the poor. I am only anxious to show that the most immediate is not always the most important service. The repeal of an unjust law will remove more misery, in the long run, than the binding up of thousands of wounds; and a woman who can interpret to her husband the hardships under which poor people are suffering from remediable causes may help them more effectually in her own drawing-room than one who spends days and nights going from one fever nest to another to carry alleviations to individuals.

Nevertheless we shall all agree that there are some immediate services which must be rendered to the poor, by women, and which cannot possibly be undertaken by ladies living at home. Some women must undertake the service of the poor as a profession. Many people who have no sympathy with the religious objects of sisterhoods, or who upon religious grounds

even disapprove of their tendencies, nevertheless think their convenience as charitable machinery a sufficient reason for encouraging them. For the sake of getting a ready supply of nurses and visitors for the poor, they would put up with the superstition which appears to them to serve, however unaccountably, as a bait to attract useful women. It is hard to say whether such a view of the subject implies a deeper want of respect for women or for religion. I propose in this chapter to consider first the possibility of providing for all the necessary professional service of the poor, without having recourse to sisterhoods; and secondly the reasons for which I think we ought to aim at this object, instead of encouraging the formation of religious associations for charitable purposes.

As in the former chapter upon the wants of the poor, I will first take the subject of nursing, leaving that of education untouched, but suggesting that a parallel may be drawn in most respects between the two professions of nursing and teaching, and then go on to say a few words upon systematic visiting of the poor.

I pointed out in that chapter that whatever might be the character or abilities needed to qualify a woman as a nurse, the possession of them did not mark her out for the exclusive service of the poor, since the work of nursing is the same whatever the social position of the patient, and even the conditions of the service do not vary so much in attendance on different classes as to make it desirable for any training institution, whether secular or religious, to restrict itself to the supply of either class. Women who are to be employed in hospital, district, or private nursing must all go through the same training, and it would in fact be a waste for any hospital to be used exclusively as a school for any one of these three branches, since the necessary work in every large hospital affords the opportunity for training more women than can be permanently employed in it; and since the payments made for the services of nurses sent out to private families can, by a very simple arrangement, be made to bear the expense of supplying nurses gratuitously to poor districts.

The best possible arrangement upon every ground for secur-

ing a supply of thoroughly trained nurses for rich and poor, the rich paying and the poor profiting by their payments, seems to be that of which I have given a full account in Part I., Chapter VI., as existing at Liverpool. Its essential feature, the training school, had been established some years earlier at St. Thomas's Hospital, in memory of Miss Nightingale's public services in the Crimean war; and there does not appear to be any reason but the want of money and the want of energy, for neither of which have we any excuse in England, why there should not be a similar training school in connection with every large hospital in the kingdom. It is so obvious a waste not to employ our hospitals as training schools for nurses as well as for medical men, that I cannot believe that we shall long continue to be guilty of it. From these training schools nurses might be sent out to private families in all directions, and all our large towns might be divided into districts like those at Liverpool, with a nurse working among the poor, under the superintendence of a lady, in each district, till we should be everywhere as well supplied with nurses as with doctors, which is far from being the case at present, and which is perhaps quite as important a measure for the preservation of life.

If half of what we hear about the want of employment for women be true, there cannot be any permanent difficulty about the supply of nurses. It is true that for reasons already given it is an object of great importance to obtain the services of women of higher moral character than those now too often admitted into our hospitals; although in this respect we have greatly improved of late years, and are on the whole somewhat better off than appears to be the case in the French hospitals served by Sisters of Charity.[1] The remedy for this evil appears to be to improve the conditions of the service, rather than to raise the wages offered, although something might perhaps be done by that means. It is no doubt right that prudent women should be attracted to a service so full of risks to health by the prospect either of a pension or of the means of making some provision for the

[1] See extract from M. Husson's report on the work of MM. Blondel and Ser, quoted p. 173, and the following passage.

future. But the great obstacle to raising the moral standard of the profession has been, I believe, in the want of care for the physical well-being and mental recreation of the nurses. Where this has been remedied, as at St. Thomas's, Liverpool,[1] and other well-managed hospitals, drunkenness and other kinds of immorality among the nurses have decreased in proportion, and, indeed, practically disappeared, since the authorities are now in a position instantly to dismiss offenders. It must always be remembered that while the great majority of men in professions or trades are married, and therefore especially want money, but as long as they can earn it have the means of supplying their own home-comforts, the women who have to work for their living are generally obliged to do so by the fact that they are unmarried, and therefore want but little money so long as home-comforts and some kind of substitute for the interests of domestic life are supplied to them. A well-managed, cheerful, and attractive Nurses' Home, in connection with every hospital, would do incalculably more to attract the right sort of women, sober, decent, home-loving, tidy, and sympathetic women, to serve in hospitals, than the same amount of money would do, if distributed in mere addition to the nurses' wages, while they were left to sleep in holes and corners, and to get their meals anyhow and anywhere. Indeed, while the conditions of life are calculated to repel self-respecting women, it is even dangerous to offer mere money payments sufficient to afford a real attraction to the mercenary.

A question here naturally arises, which is often so much mixed up with quite a different set of considerations in discussions about sisterhoods, namely, What is the social class from which nurses should be taken? It is vaguely supposed that the remedy

[1] I mention these two hospitals because the wish to study the organization of the training schools connected with them has led me to make special inquiries concerning them, not at all in disparagement of any others. I have not information enough to make any comparisons, nor do I doubt that an impartial comparison would show the same improvement in many other hospitals, in London and elsewhere. In the last annual report of Guy's Hospital, Dr. J. C. Steele has published a table showing the present arrangements about wages existing in ten of the principal London hospitals, to which I may refer those of my readers who wish to examine this subject in detail.

for the bad nursing of which we hear so much is that ladies, who undertake it from religious motives, should replace the paid nurses. Putting aside, for the present, the independent questions of motives and payment, the appropriate division of labour between women of different degrees of education seems naturally indicated by what has been said of the organization of any good training institution. It is obvious that the establishment and government of such important institutions, as well as the superintendence of district nurses, and generally all positions of authority over subordinates, require and give full scope to all the faculties of fully educated ladies, and are their proper business. On the other hand, the mere routine work of a nurse does not require more intelligence than may be expected in the class from which domestic servants come; and does require more physical exertion than most ladies are used to. It would be simple waste for ladies to devote themselves to the mere manual work of bandaging, poulticing, &c., which they can do no better than intelligent women of the servant class; a waste which is wholly unjustifiable while so much of the work which does require higher education is left undone.

The description given above of the provision which ought to be made for the physical, moral, and intellectual well-being of the nurses and probationers, employed and trained in hospitals, and eventually to be sent out to districts and private families, from whence they will return to the Home in the intervals of their engagements, opens a large and a noble field for the employment of ladies. A woman must have not only rare natural gifts, but every advantage of education and social position, to enable her rightly to fulfil the duties of the head of such an institution, to watch over the health and comfort, as well as the conduct and efficiency, of all the women under her charge, to provide them with the means of intellectual improvement and recreation, and to win their respect, confidence, and affection, as well as to distribute them judiciously among the various posts they have to fill, and to carry on all the negotiations and correspondence with societies and individuals to whom nurses are supplied. In every large institution of this kind there is work enough of superintendence for at least two

or three ladies. Just as every large convent has its superior and assistant-superior, besides treasurer, secretary, and other officials so in every large secular training institution there must be a superintendent and an assistant-superintendent at least, besides probably a secretary, housekeeper, and other subordinates. Need I say that the same considerations which I have just mentioned with regard to the importance of attracting the right sort of women as nurses, by careful attention to arranging the conditions of life for their comfort, apply with still greater force to the case of the ladies to whom the responsibility and labour of superintendence is entrusted? Whatever can be done to make such a position attractive and dignified will be well bestowed in the long run for the benefit of all classes. As in the case of nurses, the women who undertake these posts will generally be unmarried, and will care less for money than for comfortable rooms, facilities for obtaining whatever physical and intellectual refreshment they may have time for, and the interest of the work itself.

Such conditions, and almost any other terms they liked to make, might, I believe, be obtained without the smallest difficulty by really well-qualified ladies in the many training and other nursing institutions which are springing up in England. It seems at first sight strange that ladies should have such difficulty in finding employment, while the managers of important institutions and those who have to appoint women to any position of responsibility have a still greater difficulty in getting ladies to fill them. The explanation is obvious and not very creditable, but happily remediable. It is not candidates, but training and efficiency that are wanting. Till ladies learn that without thorough and serious training they cannot fill important offices, but that with thorough and serious training they may have important work to their heart's content, we shall have bad nursing, badly managed institutions, and ladies suffering from want of employment. And on the other hand it should be remembered that every social obstacle thoughtlessly opposed to the undertaking of paid offices in secular institutions by ladies is so much weight thrown into the scale of the attractions of sisterhoods. Those who exercise any influence in the matter

are bound under a serious responsibility to inquire into the truth of the theories by which alone sisterhoods can be justified.[1]

It is hard to see how any religious association could afford a more complete organization than has been described for the supply of nurses in ordinary times. But one of the great difficulties of making full provision for nursing arises from the sudden fluctuations to which the demand for nurses is subject, from the occasional occurrence of war and epidemics. It is obviously very convenient for the authorities who have to provide for such emergencies to be able simply to write to the superior of a religious order, and ask for an extra number of sisters, and to know that the number of sisters at the disposal of the superiors is far beyond what can ever be required for these purposes.

Now this convenience arises from two distinct things. The mere completeness of organization, which provides a central authority, and secures full and easily accessible information of the number and position of available women, is obviously quite independent of the religious objects of the associations which furnish the desired contingents. The other element of the facility with which religious orders can meet the demands of the civil administration for an extra supply of nurses, consists in their practice of collecting in convents a permanent margin of superfluous women. This, though it may save some trouble in times of need, appears to me to be in the long run an arrangement of very doubtful advantage from a merely utilitarian point of view. For whatever convenience it may afford in times of emergency implies an exactly corresponding waste in ordinary

[1] I may here remark, in passing, upon the strange want there is in most of our English hospitals of any arrangements for receiving patients who could afford to pay something for their own support and treatment; or rather for their paying, for we do constantly receive such patients gratuitously. It is obvious that patients can be much more easily and cheaply treated in a hospital than at home, and therefore that many are unable to secure proper treatment and attendance at home who could well afford to pay the cost of their own reception in a hospital. Surely we ought to arrange that there should be either separate hospitals, or paying wards, where those patients might be received on fair and moderate terms, who are now obliged to choose between suffering or even dying for want of the skill and care which are within the reach of the poorest on the one hand, and applying for them in the false character of paupers on the other.

times. It is impossible, that is, that people can be spared without inconvenience on emergencies unless they are unemployed in the intervals, as many women in convents probably are. Since the proportion of times of emergency to ordinary times is in the nature of the case small, this does not on the whole appear to me to be an argument in favour of convents. It is the old question between standing armies, and militias, or volunteers. Wherever you have the probability of suddenly increased demands to provide for, you must necessarily choose between two evils; between the waste implied in keeping your ordinary supply up to the level of times of need on the one hand, and the difficulty of suddenly raising it from the level of ordinary times on the other. When the thing wasted in the one case and to be suddenly called out in the other is human energy, and that of a high order, it is surely a less evil to run the risk of some slowness and awkwardness in meeting an emergency, than to incur the certain evil of permanently withdrawing from other employments a sufficient number of persons to supply it when it does occur. But where emergencies are certain to occur from time to time, as is obviously the case in respect of the demand for nurses, there is no need to choose between the two extremes of wasteful preparation and blind unreadiness. A good deal may be done in quiet times to prepare for the next sudden demand, and this very preparation may be made incidentally most useful in spreading valuable knowledge. To recur to our military parallel, the obvious alternative to a standing army of religious orders is a carefully organized system of volunteer nurses. Why should not ladies who do not wish to be put to the blush by Sisters of Charity establish a central register, where all those who would willingly come forward upon an emergency might be allowed to inscribe their names as volunteer nurses, on condition that they proved their seriousness of purpose, and their possession of the necessary physical and intellectual powers, by spending in the wards of a hospital whatever time might be necessary to qualify them for usefulness in emergencies? The details of such a scheme might be easily arranged, the hospital authorities would probably cooperate willingly, and besides the advantages which might be

derived from such an organization on the next attack of cholera or the next outbreak of war, it would tend to diffuse a certain elementary familiarity with the ordinary routine of nursing and sanitary arrangements, which would not be without its use in many families. It would further give many young women a sense of responsibility and of association in a worthy cause, with the comfort of knowing that they would be sent for when they could be really useful, which would go far to satisfy many of the vague longings now directed towards sisterhoods. It is surely very natural that a woman who feels she has the power to be useful should chafe under the necessity of sitting still at home, when she reads accounts of the ravages of war or of cholera, and appeals for help in providing nurses, just because in the first place she has never had the opportunity of trying her hand at any hospital work, and because secondly she has no means of knowing how far newspaper accounts can be depended upon; whether she is really wanted, or would only add to the confusion by going to the spot. A summons, or on the other hand the absence of a summons, from a central office able and bound to measure the magnitude of the crisis, would put an end to such profitless speculation and painful uncertainty. It would also furnish a conclusive answer to friends who naturally, and indeed rightly, think it well to throw a good deal of cold water upon unpremeditated enthusiasm. It would put the whole thing upon a methodical footing of business and duty. If only a little forethought and energy were spent in organizing a system of volunteer nurses in quiet times, instead of waiting as we have hitherto done for the emergency actually to occur, the question whether any particular woman ought to volunteer for cases of emergency could be settled in cool blood between herself and her friends; and if it were settled in the affirmative, she could then quietly and at leisure make whatever preparation can be made for such services, and obtain full information as to the best means of doing so.

It may be said that the amount of training which could be generally undertaken by such women would be of no use. But it must at any rate be better than no preparation at all, and it would be done without hurry, and at whatever time might be

most favourable with regard to the convenience of the hospital authorities and the improvement of the volunteers. And it is certain that a degree of practice which would be utterly inadequate, as training for a professional nurse, will afford some sort of test of nerve and handiness, and will take off the edge of the nervous awkwardness which most people feel on first handling a wound, or a sick person. Little as might be learnt in any such preliminary training, it would still be something saved from what will have to be learnt when the time of need comes; and it would at least be a proof, useful to a woman herself as well as to her friends, of the earnestness of her purpose. Even if the time should never come when the public authorities would be glad to claim the services of a number of women thus tested and carefully registered, it would still be a clear gain that even a few women should seriously try the experiment how far, I do not say without temporarily leaving home, but without renouncing home life, they could qualify themselves to be of use in the public service. "A stone that is fit for the wall is not left in the way," says a Persian proverb, quoted by Archbishop Trench;[1] and it matters less that the particular niche aimed at should be the one eventually occupied, than that a definite object of worthy ambition should lead to the serious cultivation of faculties to whose value it calls attention. If some of those who disapprove of sisterhoods would try the effect of competition rather than of opposition, by organizing such a plan, they might, I think, reconcile many girls to home life, as well as help them to be more useful in it, while turning the spirit of self-devotion to account in the public service, instead of allowing it to feed institutions which they believe to be in the long run injurious to the public welfare.

I am quite aware that it would not be easy at once to constitute a central authority which should from the first command such prompt obedience as is rendered by religious orders to their superiors. I only say that the facility they possess for calling forward additional nurses, when needed, is a matter of organization and administration, not of religious belief; and till we have fairly tried the experiment of equally careful organization,

1 "Lessons in Proverbs."

upon a purely secular and national basis, we have no right to say that the public spirit of Englishwomen, and their zeal to save the lives of those who are working or fighting for their country, would not supply a motive of equal efficiency with that of obedience to ecclesiastical superiors. Our own Crimean experience, and more recently that of the sanitary Commission in the American war, forbid us to think so meanly of our countrywomen.[1]

As I have said at the beginning of this chapter, I shall not attempt to describe the best arrangements for training teachers, either for rich or poor, but there is one difference which I may point out in passing between the organization required in the case of nursing and in that of teaching. Both are special arts demanding a special course of instruction, and for both purposes therefore it is evidently essential that training schools should be provided where the necessary course of study may be gone through. In the case of nurses it also seems to be in every way desirable that their connection with the central institution should continue after the period of training is over, because the demand for their services is uncertain and fluctuating, and generally sudden and urgent,—so that it is of importance that there should be a well-known institution to which the friends of patients can apply, and which is responsible for the fitness of the nurse for what she undertakes; and also because the nurses themselves require rest at uncertain intervals,—so that it is important for them that

[1] Since this passage was written, the war between France and Germany has furnished an awfully impressive commentary upon the whole of this subject, which it is perhaps too early to attempt to sum up. But it cannot fail to confirm our sense of the importance of preparation for emergencies, whatever new lights it may throw upon the best means of preparing ourselves. While these sheets are passing through the press, my attention has been called to a review of a book called "Die Deutschen Frauenvereine unter dem rothen Kreuze, von C. U. Hahn, D.D., und Ph. Dr. Protokoll der General Versammlung des Vaterländischen Frauenvereins." (Berlin: 1870. Sittenfeld.) It appears that these associations, which are purely secular, and the first of which was established in 1859, already number more than 21,000 members. Their work in the present war will doubtless furnish an example which we shall do well to study attentively.

As a first step towards the formation of an Association of Volunteer Nurses, I venture to invite any lady who would be willing to join such an association, if formed, to write to "Miss Stephen, 1, Petersham Terrace, London, W."

they should have a home to which they can return to recruit themselves in the intervals of their work, and where they will be properly cared for and advised. In the case of teachers on the other hand, there does not seem to be any special reason for their remaining in connection with a central institution (except in the way of registration), when once their course of training is over. For schoolmistresses and governesses are not exposed to any special dangers to health, and their work is regular, stationary, and calculable beforehand. They enter in short into a more or less permanent relation with the parents of their pupils, or the managers of their schools, and there is no reason why these persons and their own relations should not be able to arrange for their holidays, and for any care or advice which they may require, without the intervention of any central office. It has been found at Kaiserswerth that the majority of the teachers trained there prefer, when their course of training is complete, to be independent of the institution. This is spoken of as a matter of regret, and almost of blame, by the director,[1] but appears for the reasons just given to be a very natural tendency.

So far we have been considering the best organization of a kind of work by which all classes profit directly as well as indirectly, since all are liable to sickness and accident. When we come to the subject of visiting the poor, it is, of course, otherwise. Yet the object of visiting the poor is in such a great degree to obtain information for the guidance of the rich in measures taken with a view to the common welfare of all classes, or in which the rich have at least the direct interest of discharging a moral duty, that it can scarcely be said even that systematic visiting is undertaken for the exclusive benefit of the poor, especially when we refer to its organization on any extensive scale. It is almost as important to the rich as to the poor themselves that some women should devote themselves professionally to this work. I have said (p. 221) that there are two distinct kinds of visiting, one of which should be official and uniform, the other amateur or individual, and flexible.

1 "Nachricht über das Diakonissen-Werk." J. Disselhoff: Kaiserswerth 1867.

The question between religious and secular communities applies only to the official and, as I believe, the least beneficial form of visiting. The other kind can be done only by ladies living at home. The official visiting in connection with the poor-law in London is I believe at present entirely done by men. A great deal of avowedly amateur visiting is done by ladies living at home, in their own neighbourhood or wherever they may happen to have some accidental acquaintance among the poor. Between these two extremes there is, as we all know, a vast mass of half-organized, half-official work done by clergymen, district visitors, Scripture readers, Bible-women, sisterhoods, relief societies, and all sorts of societies for helping the poor, none of them taking account either of their overlappings or of the gaps they leave. A vigorous attempt was made last winter by a system of local committees, represented at a central committee for the organization of charity, to introduce some kind of concert among these various agencies, and between them and the poor-law authorities. I shall not attempt to suggest any better method of proceeding than is thus being tried. I shall only remark that there are two principal objects to be aimed at: first, the collection in some easily accessible place and form of every kind of information bearing upon this subject—registers of persons, places, societies, accounts, and facts of all sorts—which would seem to be work enough for one society to accomplish; and secondly, the attainment of the highest possible degree of amalgamation, or at least of concert, among all existing organizations, so that they may be as much as possible welded together into one army, and as broadly as possible distinguished from the irregular force of amateur visitors. Some of those best qualified to judge think, I believe, that the poor-law relief will never be satisfactorily administered until women are employed as relieving officers. I cannot see why the parish authorities should not have the power of formally recognizing and employing, without paying, some of the multitudes of women already at work, whether as district visitors, Bible-women, or in whatever capacity, as the "Assistance Publique" employs without paying (except so far as they support them) the French Sisters of Charity, dispensing part of

their relief through them, giving them the moral support of official sanction, and the practical advantage of forming part of one large and carefully arranged system, and receiving from them in return valuable assistance and information. However this may be, and I have no pretension to knowledge sufficient to qualify me to form a very definite opinion, it is obvious that some women must devote themselves exclusively and professionally to systematic visiting of the poor if it is to be done thoroughly—for there are many cases, especially where there are infectious diseases, and where therefore there is presumably the greatest need of assistance, which ladies living at home ought not to undertake to visit. It is also impossible for those who have other engagements to be always ready to answer appeals for help in sudden emergencies, which yet are often just the occasions on which eht most useful assistance may be given. And it is pretty generally shown, I think, by experience that there are matters of household management, petty difficulties, and petty impositions, which are more clearly understood and better dealt with by women whose social position is not far above that of the persons visited than by ladies whose own experience in these matters must be so widely different. Then, too, the distance between the poorest districts of London and those where ladies usually live makes it physically impossible that visiting done by ladies from their own homes should be sufficient to secure thorough investigation of the circumstances of the poor.

All these things suggest the importance of having in every neighbourhood some well-known institution corresponding to the "maisons de secours" at Paris, where a few women professionally devoted to the service of the poor should live, where they might receive applications for assistance, and from whence under the superintendence of ladies, and if possible in concert with, if not as authorized representatives of, the parish authorities, they should dispense relief, assistance, and advice. The district nurse would be always one member of such a community. The work would certainly not be either harder or more painful than the work done by district nurses at Liverpool and elsewhere, and already undertaken by various independent agencies in London. It is in fact no longer possible to say that visiting will not be

professionally undertaken except by sisterhoods, although where religious orders are as numerous and have been as long established as is the case in France, they offer an example of a more complete organization, and of an organization more completely in possession of the field, than any of our London societies. As I have already said with regard to nursing, we have no right, until we have tried the experiment of bestowing a similar degree of care upon the organization of secular agencies for the administration of relief, to lay the blame of any of our shortcomings upon the fact that those agencies are secular. The fact that they are so many and so very imperfectly organized and combined is a more than sufficient explanation of whatever is unsatisfactory in their working.

I have said that both the female relieving officers, if appointed, and the district nurses, would need superintendence by ladies. This affords a wide field of employment for those ladies who are able to set apart some definite portion of their time for works of charity. Their natural place is to be the officers of the regular army of relief; while those whose time is more liable to interruption, or who can work better when not associated with others, have before them the whole wide field of amateur visiting, of visiting, that is, upon the simple footing of friendly or neighbourly feeling. That which gives such visiting the unity of aim which makes it worthy of being adopted with a full and serious purpose is, as I have already tried to explain, the living link which is thus established between rich and poor, and which may be of more value to both than any mere transmission of alms, however liberal and judicious. Indeed one of the smallest of the benefits resulting from the establishment of that living link is the help such women may give in showing how relief can be most judiciously given—one of the smallest, because it is to the other benefits they may procure for the poor as the meat which perishes is to sympathy, mutual respect and understanding, and the growth of justice.

Having thus slightly and imperfectly indicated the sort of arrangements by which it seems to me that it is possible to provide for the performance of all the work undertaken by sisterhoods without having recourse to such institutions, it

remains that I should explain the reasons for which I think we ought to do so.

I have defined a sisterhood as an institution, the organization of which rests upon the assumption that works of charity, including teaching, nursing, and the administration of relief, are either acts of worship in themselves or means to an end—that end being the spiritual benefit of the performers or the objects of such work; and a secular association as one in which works of charity, so far as the organization of the association is concerned, and whatever may be the views of its individual members, are regarded as ultimate ends. Whether works of charity are really in any intelligible sense acts of worship, and how far we are justified in taking account of their probable influence upon the prospects of charitable women and the poor in the next world, are questions which must be reserved for the concluding chapter. Our present business is to estimate their effect upon the well-being of all classes of society in this life.

The fundamental characteristic of charitable sisterhoods, then, appears to be the twofold nature of their object; and this circumstance appears to me to be in itself an evil, and to have in this particular case the further disadvantage of producing several distinct dangerous tendencies.

In the first place it is obvious that wherever two motives are appealed to, the stronger will often prevail to the prejudice of the weaker. If women are invited to join a particular association upon religious and professional grounds at once, some will be attracted by the religious object who are not adapted for the profession, and some for the sake of the professional opening will make whatever religious professions may be required of them. A double basis of association always involves some inconvenience, because the unavoidable subordination of one object to the other requires the occasional sacrifice of the subordinate object. But it does not necessarily involve any dishonesty. The moment, however, that the object which is really subordinate is made ostensibly the most prominent, that moment the double aim from a mere source of inconvenience becomes a snare, and those who thus disguise their principal

aim can establish their honesty of purpose only at the expense of their clearness of head.

Now it will not be denied by any director of a sisterhood, or by any one who is at all familiar with their rules, that of the two objects for which they exist, the charitable object is always and must always be subordinate to the religious object. The directors of sisterhoods would be the first to assert the paramount importance of spiritual and religious objects in comparison with any consideration of temporal utility. It is indeed impossible that religion should not take precedence of all other objects wherever it is really an object at all. No one who believes in the existence of spiritual interests can deliberately put any merely temporal objects into competition with them.

But it is equally undeniable that the chief ground upon which all appeals for the support and encouragement of sisterhoods is made is that of their charitable ministrations. They come before us as bodies of Christian women, going about doing good, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick from simply pity and tenderness. I do not deny that these are their occupations; I do not say that they profess to have no ulterior object; but I do say that the ulterior object, that of influencing the religious state of those to whom they minister, or their own, is much less prominently put forward than the means used for that purpose. Why is this but because they know that charitable actions appeal to far wider sympathies, and constitute a claim far less easily refuted, than is the case with the religious basis upon which any particular charitable association is founded? The charitable object is one upon which there is a much more universal agreement than can be the case with the religious object, for the religious basis of an association must necessarily be not that spirit of religion which is as common as charity, but some particular creed. I may say further that, so far as I have had the opportunity of judging, the religious object is stated and enforced with far greater clearness in the rules of religious associations, which are almost invariably kept more or less private, than is done in their public statements. The policy of this reserve

is obvious, though better motives than policy may contribute to produce it.[1]

I am far from intending to intimate the slightest dishonesty of purpose in the comparative prominence thus given to the really subordinate charitable object. I think that it is necessarily misleading, but I fully believe the source of error consists rather in a want of clearness of purpose, inseparable from a double aim, unless the mutual relation of the two objects be firmly grasped and unflinchingly handled, than in any conscious unwillingness to own the real state of the case. The justification of individuals however is the condemnation of the system. It is the curse of artificial religious systems that they often involve the purest-hearted people in all the entanglements of unconscious inconsistency, the results of which are undistinguishable from those of intentional dishonesty, and thus even tend eventually to produce actual dishonesty. At any rate the false suggestion conveyed by the ostensible prominence and real subordination of the charitable object in sisterhoods is a danger which in the interests of all classes every one who can in any degree help or hinder the extension of the system is bound seriously to consider. The further dangers of which I have spoken as necessarily arising from the doubleness of aim inherent in the organization of religious associations for charitable purposes consist in the tendency of such associations to maintain pauperism, to shelter incompetence, and to produce hypocrisy.

The first dangerous result of the view of charity which regards it is a means to a spiritual end is its evident tendency to encourage pauperism. It is not possible that an association which is founded upon the assumption that works of charity are either acts of worship, or the channel of spiritual benefits, should not tend in some degree to exalt and perpetuate the relation resulting from the performance of those works. Those who

1 Secrecy with regard to rules is openly avowed by Roman Catholic orders, and tends I believe inevitably to creep in in Protestant sisterhoods. At Kaiserswerth the rule (Haus Ordnung) was freely shown in Pastor Fliedner's time—now it is not so. The reason given is substantially that which I have assigned; it is shown only to those whose sympathy can be relied on. In an account of the institution published by Miss Sewell, in *Macmillan's Magazine* for January 1870, she expressly states that she asked whether the rules were to be seen, and was told that they were not.

see in the poor the special representatives of Jesus Christ, and in all that is done for or given to them an offering to Him, cannot but invest the relation of giver and receiver of alms with a romance and a sacredness incompatible with the stern determination as far as possible to stamp out pauperism. The habit of regarding alms-giving as a form of worship, as having some inherent virtue, or, in the frank language of the Roman Catholic Church, as a commutation of penance, must tend to undermine that vigilant endeavour to get rid of the necessity of any such relationship which might guide and restrain all efforts for the relief of distress, were no such halo of sanctity reflected upon poverty. If it be true, and I cannot yet discuss the truth of the proposition, that the spiritual benefits of alms-giving outweigh the evil of perpetuating pauperism, there is no more to be said; in that case let pauperism be perpetuated by all means, but at least let the fact that such a price is paid for those spiritual benefits be openly avowed.

In the next place the organization of associations founded upon this view of charity, as means to a religious end, involves the imposition of some kind of religious test, requiring the profession of some particular form of religious belief, if not of special spiritual experience, on the part of candidates for admission; and it is easy to see the dangers to professional efficiency and to sincerity which this implies.

The propriety of imposing any kind of religious test as a qualification for any particular office obviously depends upon the special connection of religion with the office in question. It is perfectly natural and appropriate that clergymen should be required to make some definite profession of faith before ordination, because the whole business of their office is avowedly and undeniably to promote certain religious objects. In like manner, if it be assumed that either nursing or the administration of relief are spiritual offices, it will be quite a reasonable inference to say that a religious test ought to be imposed upon those who wish to enter either of these professions. But whether these professions be really spiritual offices or not, it cannot be disputed that they involve the performance of certain services of a purely physical and temporal kind. And

I think it will scarcely be denied that the right performance of these physical and temporal services requires gifts of a corresponding kind, which have no necessary connection with religious belief. I have pointed out (p. 206), and I think few of my readers will be inclined to deny the truth of the remark, that these special or professional qualifications do not lie by any means in precisely the same line as religious qualifications. If it were possible to class all the women at our disposal in order of merit, first according to their religious, and then according to their professional attainments, the two lists would probably be very differently arranged. If, instead of such an arrangement in order of merit, we simply excluded from the two lists all who fell short of a certain minimum qualification of either kind, the women excluded from the one list would probably be by no means identical with those excluded from the other. It thus appears that the introduction of a religious test is incompatible with a rigorous adhesion to the standard of professional merit. The same reasoning might be applied to the difference between classifications upon religious and upon moral grounds, though the connection between religion and morality is so much closer than between religion and professional competence that the divergence in this case would be much less considerable. Now those who regard nursing or visiting as spiritual offices, who consider the temporal services of those professions merely as means to a spiritual end, may reasonably say that the sacrifice of professional fitness involved in the classification according to religion is worth making. I shall not now dispute it. I only say that the fact that this sacrifice is made by sisterhoods ought not to be disguised. It must be justified, if at all, on the ground, not of the intrinsic importance of religion, but of the special relevance of certain religious attainments to these particular occupations.

Besides the sacrifice of professional fitness, the introduction of a religious test into the organization of sisterhoods is equivalent in its practical effect to the introduction of a religious test into the administration of relief, or at least to the appearance of a disposition to apply such a test. Some individual Sisters of Charity may be as anxious as possible to distribute

their charitable offices impartially among the just and the unjust, the religious and the irreligious ; but it is idle to suppose that poor people will not take it for granted that professions of religion on their part are a direct recommendation to those who come to visit them wearing the outward symbols of a religious profession. It cannot be denied that this is a direct encouragement to hypocrisy. It may be said that it is worth while to run that risk for the sake of inculcating religion—that the wheat cannot be sown without sowing tares at the same time. I will not now discuss this plea. I only say that the fact that the alliance of religious symbols with pecuniary assistance does encourage hypocrisy ought not to be disguised. That encouragement must be justified, if at all, on the ground that it is worth while to promote religion at the price of some injury to sincerity.

We must also bear in mind one peculiarity of organization which is in point of fact, whether as a logical necessity or not, always introduced into religious associations for charitable purposes, and which appears to me still further to aggravate these dangers. This is the absence of direct payment. The question of direct or indirect payment is one of more importance than appears at first sight, for the way in which it is decided supplies a sort of key-note to the whole internal organization of charitable associations. It is obvious that in any institution, charitable or otherwise, there must be some sort of contract between the directors and those who are to act under them ; and the nature of this contract is one of the points in which the difference between religious and secular institutions most distinctly appears. The payment of a salary defines the relation of the giver and receiver in a way which tends at once to enforce the obligation to perform certain work, and to assert independence beyond the limits of that work. While a salary marks in the most forcible way the right conferred by contract to the services for which it is paid, it also distinctly implies the absence of any binding obligation upon other grounds to perform them. You do not pay a daughter to wait upon her mother, nor a father to bring up his children. Now it is one of the great objects of religious

institutions to establish a close spiritual tie, representing the parental and filial relation, between the directors and the members. It is naturally felt that the payment of a salary in money would obliterate the sense of any such relation, and render nugatory the vow, or promise, by which it is at present defined. The policy of making no direct payments is obvious; the justification of the policy must be found in the reality of the spiritual tie by which they are superseded. If that be a fiction, the absence of payment, which I have already shown to be itself a fiction in the great majority of cases, is doubly misleading and unwholesome as tending to support it.

The whole subject of payment is one on which religious and secular associations tend moreover to diffuse different feelings beyond the circle of those who belong to them which are not without their importance. The invariable practice of religious orders in disguising the remuneration received tends to keep up a feeling, which seems to me to prevail in some respects unduly, though it has no doubt a foundation in truth, that it is derogatory, especially to ladies, to receive money payments; and a further feeling, which I believe to be altogether false and pernicious, that unpaid work may be considered as offered to God, while paid work cannot. This is the error which I have already described as simoniacal, or, as one might say, a case of inverted simony; the error of supposing that payments can destroy the value of love and duty, which arises from confounding the conditions of work with the motives from which it is undertaken.

The fact is that to receive money payments is derogatory only in that degree in which it leads people to alter their course for the worse for the sake of money. When work is done for money which would not otherwise have been done, this is an abdication, to the extent of that particular deviation, of the direction of one's own conduct, and those who are capable of directing their own course certainly stoop when they unnecessarily abdicate the power to do so. It is no doubt a valuable privilege earned for some women by the forefathers who have worked for them, and inherited by others from less meritorious ancestors, that they are under no temptation to alter their course

in any respect for the sake of money; but this privilege is valuable only to those who know how to use it. It is not the money, but the abdication, which is derogatory. If a woman must put the disposal of her time under the direction of somebody who has no natural claim upon it, I think she lowers herself less when she binds herself by the simple method of a contract marked by the acceptance of a money payment, and relating only to the particular work undertaken, than she does by entering into an artificial tie of undefined extent, ratified by a promise of obedience, and simulating natural relationships in its exclusion of money dealings. The derogation from absolute independence which is implied in doing work at the bidding of others is precisely the same whether it is openly avowed and marked by payment, or disguised under an artificial relation; but disguise of any kind is surely a greater evil than the derogation it covers.

Besides it is really derogatory to work at the bidding of others only to those who would do more important work without direction. No one is lowered by receiving payment for the best kind of work which he or she is capable of doing. Every woman must decide for herself whether she can work most effectually in a position of isolation, of subordination, or of command. The great majority, whatever their rank or fortune, are obviously only capable of filling subordinate posts; and a woman who is not ashamed to work at the bidding of strangers, and surely this is not necessarily any cause for shame, ought not to be ashamed to take a salary as men do, in whose case no one ever calls it derogatory.

Besides the merit of simply and truly defining the nature of a voluntary contract, a salary has a most wholesome effect in marking and bringing home to the conscience the obligation to do work thoroughly. It is notoriously ungracious to look a gift-horse in the mouth, and difficult for any individual or body gratuitously served to criticize such service, or to put an end to it; and though no doubt the spirit of self-devotion in many cases entirely supersedes the sense of duty, yet it remains true that unpaid work never seems to those who do it to be quite so imperative a duty as work to which they are pledged by the

fact of receiving payment for it. One of the questions which must be taken into account in estimating the influence of sisterhoods is, whether the spirit of self-devotion or the sense of duty is that which most needs cultivation in the majority of women, and is the fittest basis for permanent contracts.

This invariable tendency of sisterhoods to deal in fictitious arrangements, and, by introducing religious considerations into their plans for the service of the poor, to confuse the simple issues of how to secure professional fitness and how to promote the permanent temporal benefit of the poor, is inseparable from their view of the nature of charity, and its relation to religion. I shall hereafter try to explain what are the theological beliefs involved in that view. I cannot here express any opinion as to their truth or falsehood, I can only point out that they necessarily involve certain results injurious to the temporal interests of the poor, and to morality. But it is not only the poor whose interests are concerned in the question, whether sisterhoods should be promoted. The introduction of religious considerations into charitable associations complicates and, as I think, injuriously affects our endeavours to help them; but the manner of life and the nature of the ideal peculiar to religious communities, whether charitable or otherwise, have a yet more widely spread influence upon the character both of individuals and of society.

The essential characteristic of the manner of life peculiar to sisterhoods is the withdrawal of religious women from ordinary society. It is easy to see how unwholesome it must be for women to live exclusively with each other, to be removed from all the widening and corrective influence of association with men and with the general current of life outside their own profession; but society has also something to lose by this arrangement. Sisterhoods are sometimes spoken of as a remedy for the preponderance of women, as if women ceased to exist when they retired into them, and as if the one object to be aimed at with regard to single women was to get rid of them. It is quite true that to find the right way of employing single women is a problem of some difficulty, especially when there are necessarily so many of them, and sisterhoods offer one method of solving

this difficulty; but it is certainly not the only way, and I do not believe it to be the best way of doing so. If these women are so valuable in sisterhoods (and I most earnestly recognize their value), it seems impossible that they should not be of some value "in the world." Because a single woman's work and place in life is less obvious and comes to her more slowly and gradually than that of a married woman, it does not follow that it is less important. Surely our object should be rather to encourage single women to face and overcome the special difficulties of their position than to escape from them. Religious orders offer a sort of substitute for domestic life in the definite position and opportunities of obvious usefulness which they afford, but they deprive single women of the freedom of action and the wider range of experience and influence which are the real and only natural compensation for the permanence of the relations and the depth of the experience of married life. And they deprive society of the benefit of that very element whose value they assert so strongly. If good single women are really the salt of the earth, society can ill afford to spare them. Wherever good women are, there good deeds will be done. Some women must devote themselves to charity as a profession, but the most purely beneficial, and probably the most important, work which women can do for the poor, is, as I have already endeavoured to show, that of interpreters and links between the comparatively rich, especially laymen, and the poor; and to do this work thoroughly every thread by which charitable women are bound up with their richer friends must be carefully preserved and strengthened; to snap these threads is to lay aside their strongest instrument for really serving the poor. But it is not the poor only who need the service of love and devotion; and if education makes the hearts of the rich less readily accessible, it also makes them accessible to far more intimate and deeply reaching influence. A woman must have a low estimate of the value of friendship between equals, if she does not scruple to throw it aside for such intercourse as it is possible to establish across the wide interval interposed between different classes of society by disparity of habits and education.

Not only the way of life but the ideal of religious orders

must have a considerable, and, as I believe, on the whole an unwholesome, effect on any society in which the system prevails extensively. The nature of that ideal may fairly be gathered from the tenor of the three vows common to all the regular orders in the Roman Catholic Church, and which are manifestly, though with comparative faintness, reflected even in the most rational of Protestant sisterhoods; for the especial striving after the virtues thus indicated is the very root of the separate life of religious communities. Poverty, chastity, and obedience are the key-notes of the whole system by which these qualities are isolated and exalted into an ideal described technically as "perfection."

Now it seems at first sight as if no evil consequences could result from an endeavour to cultivate any particular virtues, even though they may constitute but a part of the perfect ideal. And I have no wish to deny that the strenuous cultivation of these virtues in religious orders has secured something like an absolute impossibility of the occurrence among Sisters of Charity of the particular offences to which I have pointed out (p. 204) that hospital nurses are specially tempted. It seems unjust to our country and our religion to doubt that an equally high standard of professional morality may be obtained among secular nurses by ordinary care; but even if the adoption of religious orders were the only means by which this degree of temperance, honesty, and chastity could be secured among nurses, it would not follow that the advantage was worth purchasing at such a price. Systems of morality must be judged upon broader grounds than their convenience in enforcing special codes of professional honour.

There are two things to be observed with regard to the narrowness of the conventual ideal in its bearing upon public morality: first, that it cannot be exalted except at the expense of the opposite ideal, for it is not merely complementary to the secular ideal, it is incompatible with it; and secondly, the explanation of this incompatibility is to be found in the fact that what the monastic ideal tends to exalt is not certain virtues, but certain conditions of life. Poverty is obviously not a state of mind, but a state of life, and it is notorious that monastic chastity and

obedience mean celibacy and submission to ecclesiastical superiors, and would not be satisfied by any degree of purity of heart and life, and loyalty of spirit, without those conditions. It is my belief that in the long run the restrictions imposed by those conditions tend inevitably to undermine the very virtues which they are intended to cultivate. It is quite true that the earnest endeavour to cultivate these virtues, even by the imposition of such restrictions, must have done some good, however mistaken the means adopted. So long as those restrictions were honestly believed to be conducive to the attainment of the virtues in question, it was right if not wise to impose them. And I do not doubt that noble service has been done to the cause of morality by the blind struggles which have been made after it by means of religious orders in times of darkness. But that is no reason why we should blindly copy the proceedings of those who had less light than we enjoy. The question we have now to decide is, whether on the whole and in the long run the conditions of life promoted by the monastic or by the secular ideal are the most conducive to morality. I have said that it is impossible to exalt the one set of conditions except at the expense of the other, for they are radically incompatible. Of course the two ways of life may be carried on side by side. Some people may, and indeed must, live in poverty, celibacy, and dependence, while others are rich, married, and independent; but it is idle to pretend that it is possible to attach credit to either way of life without depreciating the other. There is no meaning in calling a vocation blessed, if not to suggest that it is more blessed than other vocations. If poverty, celibacy, and dependence are good things in themselves, so that women ought to be encouraged to choose them, then riches, marriage, and independence are comparatively bad things, and women ought to be encouraged to renounce them.

It is often said that there is no danger of these things being too little valued, or too freely renounced. No commonplace was ever more audaciously opposed to notorious facts. The most everyday experience, especially the experience of every country where religious orders are fully established, shows that

multitudes of women are ready to renounce riches, marriage, and independence. Most people will agree that to renounce marriage must be foolish when it is not unnecessary; but there is perhaps no step which women are oftener under a temporary temptation to take prematurely, unless it be that of marriage itself. It is idle to pretend that the encouragement to renounce marriage offered by the conventual ideal is not powerful enough to be dangerous. The extracts from the official report of the results of the last census in France, given above (p. 186), will show whether this danger is altogether imaginary. Precisely the same thing may be said of wealth and independence; women constantly throw them away with childish recklessness.

But it is quite true that the danger does not always take the form of a temptation prematurely or unwisely to renounce the depreciated conditions of life. We are not perhaps in England at present in much danger of renouncing these things too freely. But we are in great danger of valuing them too little —that is, of thinking meanly of them while we pursue them. There is great danger that conscience may be blunted, and moral aspiration checked, by the habit of acquiescing in the imputation of moral inferiority. Though only the few may be tempted to give up what they ought to keep, the many are but too likely to lose self-respect while keeping what they vaguely feel they ought to give up.

For these reasons we are bound in the interests of public morality to make up our minds as distinctly as may be, whether either and which of these two sets of conditions is really superior to the other. The answer depends upon our belief respecting the questions to be considered in the next chapter, but I may say at once that the mistake at the root of all the dangers to morality resulting from the exaltation of the conventual ideal seems to me to be in its identification of virtues with conditions of life,—conditions originally adopted for the sake of cultivating those virtues, but tending gradually to supersede them in the imagination. In trying to secure the inward through the outward, the inward has to a considerable extent been sacrificed to the outward; the substance dropped in grasping at the shadow. And though the rude methods of outward

form may have done good service in inculcating morality in rude times, there is in them an element of falsehood which is peculiarly dangerous in times of formality and irreligion and low material aims. There is danger everywhere, and at all times, but never more than when the pursuit of wealth is hottest, of our taking up a worldly ideal of unworldliness, of confounding the poverty of spirit which alone can reasonably be called a grace or a virtue with actual material poverty. A coarse and money-hunting age naturally takes coarse and low views even of goodness; and though in times not fully leavened by Christianity the monastic worship of poverty as a matter of bare feet and begging of daily bread may have been the only protest against the worship of mammon striking enough to command attention, we surely ought by this time to have learned truer and worthier views of the relation of material wealth to moral elevation, and to see that our aim should be not to get rid of wealth, but to rule over it instead of being ruled by it. Tangible ostensible poverty has a coarse eloquence of its own, which may be intelligible where more refined means of expression would fail; for that very reason we must see that it is not used to spread falsehood. One exaggeration may be of use in correcting another and opposite exaggeration, but it is at best but a clumsy weapon, far less effectual than truth. Those who really think poverty, celibacy, and dependence better than riches, marriage, and independence, are right in supporting a system which exalts them; but it is impossible to justify the support of that system merely on the ground that many people exaggerate the value of the opposite conditions.

And we must remember that the weapon of exaggeration when used in the application of moral treatment is not only clumsy but dangerous. Human nature is not a mere balance-sheet, in which any excess on one side can be balanced by a simple process of addition on the other. If the conventual ideal be really exaggerated, we cannot measure the moral evils which may result from inculcating it. Opposition to the natural current of human affections may sometimes be necessary, but it is not to be imposed except at a risk which we can never exactly calculate. It is the weak point of all humanly devised

systems that they attempt to distribute forces which they cannot control, nor precisely estimate. We may be independent of things without renouncing them, but it is also possible to renounce them without becoming independent of them. The way in which nature revenges itself upon such violence as is done to it by the conventual system is a dark page in the history of morality, to which I would not, if I could, do justice. I do not care to dwell upon the corruption which, although probably reaching its maximum in some of the more secluded and ascetic of the contemplative orders in former times, is yet in a great degree due to conditions which are common to all religious communities, and therefore supplies a warning which even the purest of the active orders cannot afford to despise. I am content to assert my own deep conviction that beautiful as is their ideal, noble, pure, and holy as are the lives of many of their members, the system even of the charitable orders is essentially corruptible, even when not actually corrupt, for it has in it an element of falsehood and of opposition to the laws of nature.

For all these reasons I think we may safely assert that it is not a matter of indifference on public grounds, whether the system of religious associations for charitable purposes takes root among us or not. And if this be so, those who agree with me in believing their tendencies to be on the whole injurious to the public welfare are inexcusable if from mere indolence or want of reflection they encourage their extension for the sake of immediate convenience. Those, on the other hand, who think that whatever immediate inconveniences or apparent mischief they may cause are but the necessary price of spiritual benefits of incalculable value, are of course justified, in so far as they can justify that belief, in promoting them, notwithstanding these temporary or apparent evils. Our object in the next chapter will be to inquire into the theories by which the belief in those spiritual benefits is justified or excluded. Before proceeding to that inquiry, it will perhaps be well to recapitulate shortly the steps by which we have arrived at our present point of view.

In inquiring into the reasons, upon grounds of general utility,

for and against the establishment of sisterhoods, my first business was to explain how it was that the burthen of proof lay on their advocates, and then, after protesting against the unfair comparisons commonly made between the greatest advantages possible under one system with the greatest mischief which may arise under the other, I considered the different views which might be taken of sisterhoods as contrivances either for increasing the number of, or merely collecting and distributing, good women, and the reasons for which we must for the present regard them in the latter light. I then explained the sense in which I was about to use the expression "works of charity," which is generally used vaguely to convey the idea of a service rendered to a poor person, without payment, and from Christian motives, but which, putting aside for the present the consideration of motives and of pecuniary arrangements, I was about to confine to services rendered to the poor as a class. Inquiring into the nature of the services required by the poor, I pointed out that while nursing and teaching are wants which they share with the rich, what may be roughly called the administration of relief is a want peculiar to the poor. Nursing and teaching are special arts, with the requirements of which we are familiar from our own experience. I explained the reasons for which the duties of a nurse require high principle, and described the gifts and virtues which qualify a woman for the office; and I pointed out that while religion is no doubt favourable to their cultivation, they may, and sometimes do, exist without it, as it may undoubtedly exist without them, and that therefore it would be obviously foolish to choose nurses according to their religious character, unless the physical work be regarded as subordinate to the spiritual. I have shown that nursing affords opportunities of exercising spiritual influence which a truly religious woman will turn to better account than a woman who is not so. Reserving for future consideration the question whether it is possible or desirable to train women to exercise such influence, I pointed out that the work of nursing the rich is so far identical with that of nursing the poor, that the same associations, whether secular or religious, generally supply nurses for both rich and

poor; and that since sickness is common to all classes, it follows that if religion be a necessary qualification for nursing, religious women are needed as much for the service of the rich as of the poor. I have said that I believe exactly the same reasoning to apply to the case of teaching.

Passing then to the wants peculiar to the poor, I showed that the objects of systematic visiting are, (1), pecuniary relief, which is difficult and dangerous, and ought to be suicidal; (2), moral and other improvement, which is not universally required by the poor from the rich, and to which the means proposed are almost absurdly inadequate; and (3), the collection of information and establishment of a friendly link between rich and poor, which systematic visiting inevitably effects to a considerable extent, and which so far as it goes is purely beneficial. I have said, that when account is taken of the degree in which any of these objects is practicable, the last appears to me to be by far the most important, since it enlists in the service of the poor the relations and friends of the visitor, and thus its collective indirect result may be to bring about and direct legislative measures of the highest importance to the poor as a class. I have described the qualities needed for successful visiting, which, as in the case of nursing and teaching, are not always coincident with religion in individuals; and since teachers and visitors are not necessarily exposed to any special temptations, the appropriateness of religion to these offices depends not upon its necessity as a guarantee for fidelity, but on the opportunities these employments may be supposed to offer of exercising spiritual influence—opportunities the nature of which will be further examined in the last chapter.

Reserving for subsequent consideration the question of the comparative advantages of individual and associated action in nursing and teaching, I endeavoured to show that systematic visiting of the poor should be partly official and uniform, partly private and flexible; that the former kind of work may be done by members of an association, whether secular or religious, and that an association would probably be found to offer special advantages for the purpose; while the latter kind of visiting,

and especially its effect as a bond of union between rich and poor, belongs exclusively to the independent action of women living in their own homes.

Passing then, in the next chapter, to the consideration of the interests of charitable women, I endeavoured to describe the way in which the free circulation of descriptions of poverty, and of the efforts being made for its relief, naturally excite the imagination and arouse the emulation of enthusiastic young women; and how the desire to be useful which first attracts them to sisterhoods is often converted by unreasonable opposition into passionate partizanship. I have suggested that some part of their compulsory leisure might well be devoted to studying the advantages and disadvantages of sisterhoods, and the alternative methods of proceeding which are open to them. I have remarked that the right method for those who disapprove of religious associations is, not to depreciate the advantages of attractive charitable organization, but to deprive them of the monopoly of it. The reasonable attractions of sisterhoods seem to consist in their offer of training, protection, and authoritative direction in work which supplies food for the affections while promoting the salvation of souls and the glory of God.

The power of affording training being rather the effect than the cause of possession of the field of practice, is only accidentally, if at all, in the hands of sisterhoods, and the question whether it ought to be entrusted to them is one which the authorities of public institutions must decide upon other considerations than that of technical proficiency. Protection is offered by sisterhoods in common with all recognized professions and institutions against hindrances from without, and weakness and irresolution within; but religious institutions carry it further than can be done by any secular institutions or voluntary connections except marriage, by means of the power they claim over the conscience. Vows are as superfluous where this claim is acknowledged, as they would be profane in those who deny it. I have endeavoured to trace the way in which the social and pecuniary arrangements of sisterhood life attract those who do and those who do not profit by them; the first by solid advantages, the second by the fiction, true in their own

case, but false as regards some of their associates, of disinterestedness. I have tried to explain the evils of this fiction of disinterestedness, and the undeserved discredit which it throws upon the honest earning of wages.

Authoritative direction is partly a mere form of centralization, but its chief attraction and its danger begin at the point where it becomes peculiar to sisterhoods; *i.e.* where it takes the place of conscience, and involves a corresponding spiritual abdication.

I then endeavoured to explain the way in which women were impelled to undertake the service of the poor by the desire for work which should supply food for the affections while promoting the salvation of souls and the glory of God. Reserving all inquiry into the latter object for a future chapter, but briefly asserting its force as a motive, I inquired more fully into the way in which sisterhoods attract women through the affections; as offering a home which combines ready access to the poor with association with people who sympathize in their charitable zeal. I distinguished between the cases of those who have and those who have not a home of their own to leave, and pointed out that the provision of a home for homeless ladies was perhaps one of the greatest merits of sisterhoods, though not likely to be very beneficial to the poor, nor perhaps in the long run to the rich. In the case of those who do leave a happy home to devote themselves to the service of the poor in a sisterhood, I have said that while heartily recognizing the nobleness of the impulse to serve others, and the necessity under which most unmarried women are of including the poor in the circle of their affections, if they desire that a single life should be made the means of expanding rather than of cramping those affections, I regard it as a great misfortune that the impulse of self-devotion should be confined to the service of the poor. I endeavoured to show how the elevated and beautiful but narrow ideal of charitable religious orders acted in stirring up emulation, but ought not to satisfy those who are in a position to see its incompleteness; while for the sake of the very qualities it represents we ought to examine narrowly the means by which sisterhood life is supposed to teach them; the chief of which is active work for others, for which they afford no doubt ample

opportunities, but opportunities which are no more peculiar to them than the air they breathe. I have said that I believe their distinctive means of education, namely, religious discipline administered by rule and exclusive association with people of one's own way of thinking, to be always dangerous and often most injurious. Then turning to the consideration of the necessary price which must be paid for the supposed advantages of sisterhood life, I have said that beyond the mere necessary physical hardships, which it is almost an insult to such women as can appreciate the objects of their profession to describe as a sacrifice, the great price is in the breaking of family ties involved not in leaving home, but in the inevitable transference of allegiance on entering a service claiming to be in an especial manner the service of God; which if it be, as I believe, an unjustifiable step, is certain to be punished, not by any change in the balance of pain and pleasure, which no one can calculate, and as to which the indiscriminate claim to the merit of self-sacrifice put forward by religious orders tends to conceal the fact that the joys of home cannot be renounced without its sorrows; but by the inevitable loss of the highest of all possible educations, namely, the intimacy of family life with fathers and brothers, and free communication with laymen generally. I have observed that trials arising from the religious controversies of these times often drive women to seek the relief offered by sisterhoods; but while recognizing the painfulness of the position of believing women in "the world" in this respect, I have endeavoured to point out its importance, and to urge the duty of not deserting it.

In the chapter just concluded, I have endeavoured to throw some light on the way in which, for the sake of the public welfare, those women who can choose their own course ought to act with regard to the service of the poor. I have said that the question of the right distribution of religious women between rich and poor cannot be answered with numerical precision, nor with any attempt to indicate the proper work of individuals. The claims of the poor upon the service of good women being generally recognized, I have tried on the other hand to show how the wants of the rich are increased by

the increased range both of suffering and of action opened by education; and how their interests are interwoven with those of the poor, so that neither can really be served exclusively; that immediate service is not always the most important, and that our happiness and usefulness are increased in proportion as all classes can be included in the range of our sympathies and influence. But since some women must undertake the immediate and professional service of the poor, I have endeavoured to show how this may be provided for without having recourse to sisterhoods, and why we ought to aim at doing without them. Taking first the case of nursing, I pointed out it would be mere waste for any training school not to supply nurses for rich and poor alike, since the work is the same for both, and the payment of rich patients would supply funds for sending nurses gratuitously to the poor; that it is also great waste not to establish in every large hospital a training school for nurses, with a carefully arranged nurses' home; that the improvement in the conditions of the nurse's life which might thus be secured would be a more effectual and safer means than any increase of pay to attract the right class of women; that every such institution must have one or more ladies at its head, whose comfort and dignity should be similarly cared for. I have pointed out the waste of power which would be caused by ladies undertaking the work of nurses instead of their proper business of superintendence, and the necessity of their going through a serious training if they wish to do their own business properly. Then passing to the question of provision for times of emergency, I have suggested a plan for organizing a system of volunteer nurses in preparation for war or epidemics, by which we might at once spread practical education in quiet times, and be more fully prepared beforehand to do again what was done in the Crimea without any such preliminary organization.

After a few words on the difference between the organization required for nursing and teaching arising from the comparative steadiness of the demand for teachers, I proceeded to the question of visiting the poor, and to mention the importance of collecting facts, of harmonizing as much as possible the action

of all official systems of visiting, both legal and charitable, suggesting the possibility of women being employed, or at least authorized by the poor-law authorities to act as relieving officers, and stationed in districts, as is done in the "maisons de secours" at Paris; while ladies living at home may exercise other and still more important functions both of superintendence and of personal intercourse with the poor.

Such being the arrangements by which I think we might make ourselves independent of sisterhoods, I have tried to explain why we ought to prefer them to the encouragement of religious associations for charitable purposes. I have pointed out that the doubleness of the object of such associations necessarily involves some inconvenience, and that the ostensible prominence of the really subordinate object further involves the appearance of dishonesty, from the reality of which their directors may be, and as I believe are, rightly vindicated at the expense of their clearness of purpose. The policy of appealing to the widely-spread sympathy excited by charitable actions rather than to the less universal agreement in their religious tenets, and the connection of this instinctive reference to actions rather than forms of belief with the reserve practised by all sisterhoods about their rules, are equally obvious; and the justification of such conduct in individuals is, the condemnation of the system. I have said that the inevitable subordination of charity to religion tends to encourage pauperism, and that the consequent imposition of a religious test upon candidates tends to produce deviation from the strict standard of professional competence, while the alliance of religious symbols with pecuniary assistance tends to encourage hypocrisy in those whom they relieve. I have said that if the spiritual benefits conferred by sisterhoods are worth buying at this price, their cost ought at any rate not to be disguised. I have then considered the comparative advantages of direct and indirect payment; the incompatibility of direct money payments with the endeavour to establish an artificial spiritual relation, and their superior simplicity and effectiveness in attaching a sense of duty to the performance of the work undertaken by a contract thus defined.

I have then described the moral dangers which may be apprehended from the withdrawal of large numbers of women from ordinary society, and from the exaltation of the conventual ideal of poverty, chastity, and obedience; the words chastity and obedience being taken in the sense not of purity and loyalty, but of celibacy and submission to ecclesiastical authority. I have said that if poverty, celibacy, and dependence be not really intrinsically good things, we must inevitably do harm, the extent of which we cannot measure, by exalting them at the expense of riches, marriage, and independence, which the few will thus be tempted to renounce prematurely, while the many, so far as they are influenced at all, will lose self-respect in keeping them while acquiescing in the imputation of moral inferiority. I have pointed out that the danger of an exaggerated theory when embodied in a practical system does not stop short at falsehood, but tends to produce moral evils which in some cases assume serious proportions, and which may not be safely disregarded in any case. The questions are thus suggested, What are the theological theories upon which the system of religious sisterhoods is justified? and what are the spiritual benefits which it offers? These questions we shall proceed to examine in the last chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

THE THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS AT ISSUE.

In the preceding chapters I have been content rather to state my case than to argue it, for the evidence to which I should have to appeal to establish the statements I have made consists in such a multitude of facts, and of facts so easily within the reach of any one who takes any interest in the inquiry, that it would have seemed a waste of time and space to attempt to prove those general statements. In the present chapter my task will be still more emphatically one of explanation rather than of proof, for the theological questions upon which the whole practical question really turns involve propositions which, if not so easily verified as the facts relating to the temporal interests of the various classes concerned, are at least equally beyond the scope of the present inquiry; which is into the nature of the reasons for and against sisterhoods, not into the validity of those reasons. I shall endeavour to explain the way in which the practical question turns upon certain underlying theological questions, and I shall unreservedly state my own belief respecting those theological questions, but I shall make no attempt to convince those who entertain a different belief. My object is to contribute rather to a process of sifting and arrangement by which our sympathies may be brought into harmony with our serious convictions, than to any change in the nature of those convictions. I appeal to those who really agree with me not to play into the hands of those from whom we alike really differ, through indolence, or carelessness, or a hasty enthusiasm. I make no appeal to those who deliberately differ from me, for I am well aware that the grounds of our difference probably lie too deep for me to attempt to remove them.

I have defined a sisterhood as an association, the organization of which is based upon the assumption that works of charity are either acts of worship in themselves, or means to an end, that end being the spiritual welfare of the objects or the performers of those works. In other words, the service of the poor is regarded by them not only as subordinate to the promotion of the salvation of souls and the glory of God, in the sense in which whatever we lawfully do may be regarded as subordinate to those objects, but as having a special and necessary tendency to promote them, and a special fitness to express devotion. I have pointed out the ambiguous sense in which the expression "works of charity" is used by the framers of these institutions, so as to convey the notion of a service rendered to a poor person without payment and from religious motives; and I have shown that to acquiesce in this sense of the word partly confuses and partly begs the question between religious and secular associations. It confuses it by introducing a reference to motives, which are obviously independent of the nature of any organization, however they may indirectly affect and be affected by it; and it begs it by introducing a condition excluding direct payment, which is one of the points upon which there is an essential difference between the two forms of association. I must therefore still use the expression "works of charity" in the sense I have already attached to it, of works undertaken for the benefit of the poor as members of a class; and the nature of the connection of the service of the poor with religious motives, such as are held to imply the exclusion of direct payment, will be among the subjects into which we have to inquire.

The general question then which lies before us is into the nature of the connection between the service of the poor and certain religious objects; that is, whether that connection consists in its having a special and necessary tendency to promote these objects, or only in that general subordination to them which all truly religious people recognize in all the legitimate employments of life, and which I desire not only to acknowledge but to assert. I shall first consider what is implied in the habit of regarding works of charity as acts of worship, and afterwards

inquire into their tendency to promote the salvation of souls and the glory of God.

In the last chapter I suggested a distinction into which I must here a little more fully enter, between the immediate and what may be called the remote service of the poor. I then said that the most immediate are not always the most important services, and that the beneficial measures which women might in their own homes assist in bringing about often relieved more misery than all the alleviations which they could offer by giving up their whole time to the immediate service of the poor. Now the question naturally arises, whether those whose time is spent in endeavouring thus to promote the welfare of the poor, by beneficial changes in the law, or by the introduction of social reforms or other general measures, are or are not engaged in works of charity. It is certainly not for the performance of such works as these that religious sisterhoods are established or defended. Their way of life, on the contrary, effectually deprives those women who join them of any share they might naturally have had in bringing about such measures, for they cut them off from association with the men by whose concurrence alone any such works can be brought about. Now I believe that the promoters and defenders of sisterhoods would probably say that such remote efforts on behalf of the poor did not constitute works of charity at all, as not being undertaken from religious motives; and upon a different ground I should be inclined to agree with them, for to be really useful such works must be rather acts of justice than works of charity, using both these expressions in their rough and common interpretation. That is, we can do more to help the poor by removing grievances which ought never to have been allowed to exist, than by bestowing what we may consider to be positive benefits upon them. The measures by which we help them most are not those which are intended most exclusively for their benefit, but those which aim at bringing all classes into natural and harmonious relations. It is however a matter of indifference for my purpose whether these remote services be included in the theory of works of charity or not; for it is no harder to disprove their special and necessary tendency to

promote spiritual ends than to disprove that of the immediate service of the poor to do so. But the fact that in practice religious sisterhoods do exclude them from the range of their employments is a very significant one. To my mind this fact furnishes, as already remarked, one of the strongest arguments against sisterhoods, because I believe these remote services to be far more important and beneficial in the long run to the poor, as well as to other classes, than any of the immediate and personal services which charitable women can render to them. It is also very significant as indicating the first great divergence which we have to notice between the aims of religious and of secular associations. In the latter case the benefit of the poor is the ultimate end of the association, and therefore whatever can be shown to be in the long run and upon the whole the most effectual method of benefiting them is the object to which secular charitable associations naturally tend; whereas religious associations exist for the purpose, as they would express it, of serving the Lord Jesus Christ in His poor, and therefore whatever best expresses devotion to Him is the object to which they naturally tend. Now it is easy to see how the lowest and most personal services lend themselves to this expression of personal devotion, in a way which no legislation or organization of social effort can do. A woman washing the feet or binding up the wounds of a poor beggar is to herself and others a picturesque expression of humble and devoted love and worship; and if she be a lady of high birth and great refinement, the effect is all the more expressive: whereas the same lady sitting in her husband's study, giving him the benefit of her experience and observation among blue-books and statistics, may be doing much more to help the poor; but whatever devotion may be inspiring her heart, it is not expressed in her outward attitude or surroundings. I do not despise outward and visible expressions of devotion, but I think we should regard them as means, not as ends; as language, not as good actions; and the more eloquent their language is, the more we are bound to see that it is used to convey truth and not falsehood.

What then is the meaning conveyed by the use of acts of

personal service to the poor as a form of worship? What is the precise meaning of the language with which we are all so familiar on the lips especially of the promoters of charitable religious orders, but which the ecclesiastical view of charity has diffused far more widely than those orders have spread, the language in which the poor are habitually described as the representatives of Jesus Christ, and whatever is done for them is regarded as an expression of love for Him, as partaking of the sacredness of prayer? Such language is generally vague enough to evade the distinction upon which its whole point and force as an incentive to the service of the poor really depends, the distinction, namely, between including the poor among those who represent the Divine Being to us, and excluding all but the poor from that sacred position. If it be merely intended to assert that service done even to the lowest and poorest is service done to our Master, this is a statement which no Christian will dispute, but it is no reason for preferring the service of the poor to that of the rich. If on the other hand it be intended to assert that the poor are His exclusive representatives, this indeed might, if true, be a reason why Christians should devote themselves exclusively to the service of the poor, but it is an assertion the truth of which it would be very difficult to prove.

It is not difficult to see how the appropriation, if I may so express myself, of sacredness to the poor grew up in the course of time; how from its being the distinctive glory of the Christian religion that it admitted the lowest and poorest to equal fellowship in one common bond, the fact of their admission to that fellowship was insisted upon and gloried in until it gradually impressed a distinctively and even exclusively sacred character upon whatever was done to assert it; until in short the centre was lost sight of in the circumference, and that which had been a widening of the range of sympathy and affection became a narrowing of it, by the practical exclusion of those whose claim, never having been specially denied, had never needed the same emphatic vindication. No one says in so many words that money and station deprive those who possess them of the character of representatives of Christ; but

if it be not so, what becomes of the specially sacred character of works of charity? If the rich may, as I believe, be quite as truly called representatives of Christ as the poor, what more special connection has the service of the poor with religion than the service of the rich, or the public service generally? The only sense in which with any reason it can be called a religious duty to serve the poor, is that religion teaches, and is perhaps the only feeling which will always and everywhere effectually enforce, the duty of including the poor in the range of our ministrations; the fact that we do so may thus be regarded as affording some slight presumption of our being influenced by religious principle; but when the service of the poor is not only included among the duties inculcated by religion, but invested in an especial manner with a religious character, what is this but in the name of religion to exclude all but the poor from their place among those whom we ought to serve for Christ's sake?

If it is easy to see how this transition from including the poor to excluding the rich should have come about, it is even less difficult to understand the hold which the idea of special sacredness as attached to the immediate service of the poor has upon the minds of Christians. I have said that our willingness to render such services may be regarded as to some extent a proof of religious feeling. Now no fact is more familiar than the force of the natural longing to give some proof of any devotion which is strongly felt; the tendency of every affectionate nature to seek for the means of expression, to take delight in outward actions which shall embody its affections, and testify their intensity both to the actor and to the witnesses of such actions, and above all to the object of affection or devotion. This human feeling in religion is naturally strongly called out by the worship of One who is believed to be both God and man. The worshippers of Jesus Christ have always combined with the adoration due to Him as God a strong element of personal affection to Him as man. God forbid that I should appear to undervalue that faith in "God made manifest in the flesh," which is the very essence of the Christian revelation. But I dare not conceal my belief that there is great danger lest a reverent contemplation of that mystery should pass into an

idolatrous worship of the human being thus identified (if I may venture so to speak, and I know not how otherwise to express my thought) with the Divine Being. This is a topic so awful that I would gladly keep silence upon it, believing as I do that a reverent silence even of thought is the fittest attitude of mind for human beings brought face to face with subjects of such transcendent mystery. But there are times when reverence itself demands that silence should be broken, lest it be interpreted as an acquiescence in debasing conceptions of Divine things. And I say with all seriousness and humility, but with a strong feeling that however mistaken or incompetent I may be, it is not altogether beating the air to say so, that the habit of regarding the poor as the special representatives of Christ, and the immediate and personal services done to them as expressions of love and devotion to Him, depends to a great extent upon, and has a very dangerous tendency to increase the force of, the inveterate inclination of human nature to transfer its adoration from the Divine to the human element in the object of worship. I would rather, however, inquire into the practical results of this view of charity than dwell upon its connection with doctrines the discussion of which inevitably leads us out of our depth, and tempts us to darken counsel and to profane the unspeakable by words without knowledge.

The chief practical result of this view of charity, as a means of expressing through personal services rendered to the poor a personal sense of love and devotion to Christ, is to lead people to value services according to their humbleness rather than their importance. It is well known how this tendency to prefer the lowliest offices runs through all the feeling of the Roman Catholic Church, and is indeed frankly professed and applauded in their religious writings. In a less degree it pervades the feeling of Protestant sisterhoods, and indeed of most religious people, of whatever denomination. And it no doubt depends not merely upon an arbitrary and, as it appears to me, altogether groundless notion that the poor are more nearly related to Christ than others, but upon a far deeper foundation, upon the fervour of a love which is not satisfied with mere

obedience, but longs to pour itself out in sacrifice; a spirit of enthusiastic self-devotion with which the noblest natures will most readily sympathize. There are cases when a splendid waste is worth any amount of judicious appropriation—there are forlorn hopes in charity as well as in war, and the men and women who have poured out their lives like water in ministering to the sick have often done as good service as those who have spent theirs with the same magnanimous prodigality on the battle-field. Such noble self-sacrifice deserves all the enthusiastic homage it inspires. For that very reason let us not degrade it into a matter of system. It is far easier to bring down heroism to routine than to elevate routine into heroism. The moment you attempt to found a rule for the many upon the splendid privilege of the few, that moment you sanction waste and encourage hypocrisy. For the very essence of the grandeur of such heroic deeds as I have spoken of is that lives are really sacrificed to them; health and strength and all that goes to make up a valuable life are given away in a moment for the sake of a great duty or a great opportunity. The sacrifice which leaves those who make it in possession of the power to repeat it day after day is necessarily a small and not a final sacrifice; and though such small repeated sacrifices if real may not be contemptible in the long run, yet even then they are not things to be talked of as heroic.

But it is further to be observed, that if they do not deprive those who make them of any of their powers of body or mind, they are not really sacrifices; if they do, they must be unwholesome as habits; that is, they must waste the strength needed for service. This difficulty appears to me to be quite fatal to all systematic asceticism. If self-denial be practised only up to the point at which it braces and strengthens the moral faculties, it is not a sacrifice but a rational means of self-improvement—it is only a denial of some comparatively low inclination, which is well repaid to the person making it by the gain to the higher part of the nature. But the moment when from a means it becomes an end, and is habitually practised for the sake of the pain or the humiliation it may involve, that moment it becomes a sacrifice indeed, but a

sacrifice of health and happiness which can serve no purpose but that of display, though the spectators may be oneself and Heaven alone; in other words a waste and a wrong-doing. To be willing and even eager to make great sacrifices on great occasions is characteristic of noble hearts and deep affections; but deliberately to attempt to reduce sacrifice to system and adopt it as a plan of life appears to me to imply such an utter misconception of its real beauty as can arise only from coldness of heart or weakness of brain. It is impossible to love much without sometimes feeling the need to express affection, and without rejoicing in any opportunity which may arise of giving an effectual testimony of it; but it is not those who love most truly who are most constantly seeking means to express their affection, or going out of their way to prove it. The whole value and beauty of sacrifice as a proof of love depends upon its not being sought for or obtruded, but bravely and willingly met when it is the necessary condition of a real service. To make it an object of desire is to make it unreal, and it is only in this unreal form that it can ever become part of a system of practice, for a system is something which we deliberately choose and set before ourselves as desirable. The preference of low and painful offices, of which we find traces wherever the ascetic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church has had any influence, appears to me to be one of these unreal forms of sacrifice which combine waste with insincerity; waste of power when those who choose them might be doing more important work, and insincerity when humiliation is voluntarily sought for as a means of expressing love which would take no harm by being unexpressed, or, still worse, as a means of obtaining spiritual exaltation hereafter.

It is hard to say which of these tendencies constitutes the more serious evil. The waste of power which is implied in encouraging women of abilities and education, which qualify them to govern, to spend their time in submitting to government, and in filling subordinate offices which might be quite as effectually filled by their inferiors, or in working with their hands when they might be using their heads, is grievous enough, though the sagacity of ecclesiastical superiors keeps it within bounds in most religious orders; but the artificial value which

the ecclesiastical glorification of low personal services tends to attach to them, and the consequent depreciation of wider and higher aims, does not end with the mere misplacement of individuals. It spreads a confused and misleading notion of the sanctity of low offices as compared with more important undertakings beyond the limits of the orders which avowedly recognize that principle; and it cannot be denied that it is used by the Roman Catholic Church as a means of appealing to popular admiration.

Perhaps the insincerity which accompanies voluntary humility is a more tangible if not a more serious evil. The saying, that he that humbleth himself shall be exalted, was surely never meant to suggest to spiritual ambition an indirect but particularly effectual means of gratification. Yet this is the inevitable result of the systematic exaltation of humility practised by religious orders. No one who knows anything either of their rules or of the ordinary behaviour of their members will say that women are naturally so free from spiritual vanity that there is no danger in stimulating it by the perpetual application of complimentary language to the performance of low and therefore easy though perhaps distasteful duties. Both these evils appear to me to result naturally and inevitably from the employment of the eloquent language of charitable organizations to convey the false impression that low and painful services are more sacred than important and painless ones.

As the exaltation of sacrifice as an end tends to produce waste and insincerity, so it has an obvious connection on the one hand with artificial system, and on the other with want of faith. For, in the first place, the real beauty and value of all sacrifice is the proof it affords of strong feeling, and the moment admiration is transferred from the feeling thus testified to the means by which it is testified, the moment people attach an independent value to the painful sign of love, that moment they begin to seek for the support of an external system to bind them to the stake. Love may be trusted to take care of itself, and as it grows and strengthens it will surely triumph over pain; but to choose pain is so contrary to human nature that it can be made into a habit only by severe and constant discipline,

by the discipline of an external system. The system of religious orders no doubt is an impressive and eloquent sign; a glorification of sacrifice which captivates the imagination; but the spirit of Christian love which has supplied the material out of which that eloquent sign has been wrought, and by which its noblest ornaments have been inspired, is something far beyond and above the system which has exhibited it. And I cannot but believe that that spirit would have flourished more vigorously, and would have been freer from the taint of ostentation, if the energy which has been spent in reducing it to a system, and in disciplining those whom it supported, had been bestowed simply upon removing external hindrances and overcoming natural difficulties. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and though we hear the sound thereof, we cannot tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth. It is not for us to attempt to control and direct each other's spirits, but to make straight paths for our feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way—to remove what difficulties we can, and order our plans of action in accordance with such of the Divine laws as we can understand; not to raise up difficulties of human contrivance and impose burdens of unnecessary pain, for the sake of exhibiting the strength of the Spirit of God in enabling weak creatures to overcome them.

And secondly, the love of signs seems to be characteristic of imperfect belief. As the whole mind becomes leavened with any faith, the desire to give and receive proof of it disappears in the fulness of conviction. It is true that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, but language which is really the spontaneous overflow of a full heart is never moulded (unless the mind be very imperfectly educated) into the current coin of religious phrases, but is as various and fresh in form and colour as the experience of life from which it arises. Thus we naturally associate crude and formal expressions of religious belief with conduct not wholly harmonious. And it seems to me that the reduction of Christian love and devotion to systematic and technical forms is in a similar manner characteristic of a half-Christianized state of things, and that to desire to return to such formal expressions

of the spirit of Christianity is at best but a retrograde movement. The generation which seeketh after a sign is not a generation in the highest state of Christian feeling.

I have said that the reference to motives confuses the question of the best mode of organization, by introducing considerations which are obviously independent of organization, though affecting and affected by our choice between rival systems. It is sometimes assumed that none but purely religious motives can make any woman become a Sister of Charity, and that none but mercenary motives can make any woman undertake paid work of a charitable kind. The flagrant injustice of thus denying the force of all human and natural motives of pity, benevolence, professional enthusiasm, and simple kindness is equalled only by its manifest falsehood. Yet how often are we told that it is Sisters of Charity alone who serve the poor from pure love of them. I altogether and emphatically deny it. I have already shown that they are as well paid as most secular nurses; better than many, since in addition to the supply of all their present wants they all have a perfectly secure provision for the future, and obtain a certain social standing on the strength of the fiction that their services are unpaid; I have protested against the confusion between motives and conditions which would dare to attach an idea of something mercenary and degrading to the honest earning of wages. I will go further and assert that none but secular nurses and visitors could do their work from pure love to the poor, if people were always true to the spirit of their institutions,—which, thank God, many Sisters of Charity doubtless are not,—for none but secular associations are free from the self-regarding desire to use their services to others as an expression of their own religious feeling.[1]

I have seldom heard a sadder confession, or one that told a more grievous tale of natural feelings distorted and wounded

[1] Compare in this point of view the language of any one of the sisterhoods above described with that of the Liverpool Training Institution, and observe how entirely the self-regarding idea of a blessed vocation gives place, in the secular institution, to the disinterested and single aim of a useful work.

by the profane hand of man, than I once heard from the lips of a Sister of Charity whom I had accompanied in her visits to some of her sick poor at Paris, and who seemed to me to be as like an angel in human form as any woman could well be. She was spending her very life for them; and I fear had not much more to spend; she seemed bowed to the earth not by her own sufferings, severe as they evidently were, so much as by those of her poor people and her own sense of utter helplessness to relieve or benefit many of them—contending as she was day by day with a mass of poverty, ignorance, and misery which she evidently felt her visits to be utterly inadequate even perceptibly to lessen. When the visits were over, I said to her something of the comfort she must at least have in carrying some alleviations to the people she loved so well—her face for a moment lightened up as she said "Yes, they are my joy;" and then it fell again, and a dark cloud came over her as she continued half bitterly and altogether sorrowfully, "I *cannot* help it—I cannot help loving them—I have no merit in my work, for I do love the poor—some of my sisters have so much merit, for they do it all for Jesus, and not at all for the poor." I knew too much of the rule of her order (see Chap. IV.) to have any hope of comforting her by asking if there could be a more beautiful or holy thing than to work from pure love. That woman's life and work could scarcely have been more beautiful and noble than they seemed to me to be, but might not her life have been much longer, her work far wider and more effectual, and her spirit infinitely more happy, if she had been left to work out her noble impulses in the natural way, serving her beloved poor freely, and hand in hand with those whose strength would have supported her weakness, cheered by natural affection, and receiving all the help and cultivation that a free and varied life can give in order to share it with those in need, whatever their social position; instead of being taught not only to serve the poor exclusively, but to regard even them not as legitimate objects of affection, but merely as instruments for expressing and proving worship to Him to whom all proof must be as worthless as the fat of lambs?

It may be said this is the Roman Catholic system; and it is

true that it is to the Roman Catholic Church that we must look for the most explicit and pointed avowals of such views; and it is in countries where that church has always been supreme that we shall find the commonest and most striking results of this kind of teaching in the habitual feeling of the people. But my very object is to show what are the logical consequences, and what therefore must be the tendency in the long run, of that part of the Roman Catholic system which it is proposed that we should borrow from them.

Hitherto I have not thought it necessary to distinguish between Catholic and Protestant sisterhoods, for both alike regard the immediate service of the poor as in a special manner adapted to the expression of personal love and devotion to their common Saviour; and both are alike opposed to secular associations for charitable purposes by their introduction of this self-regarding element, this desire to express a feeling of their own, into the service of the poor, which secular associations regard and undertake simply as an act of benevolence, if not of duty, to those with whom they are bound up by the ties of neighbourhood, nationality, or opportunity. The distinction between the religious and the secular view of charity is far deeper and more constant than any of the distinctions between the various forms which the religious view assumes in different churches.

The one broad distinction between religious and secular associations is this;—that the organization of the one takes account of and provides for both the training and the expression of feelings, and the exercise of spiritual influences, as to which the other is entirely silent and neutral. It is one of the commonest injustices which beset this question, that people constantly talk as if the organization of charitable associations upon a secular basis excluded the action of religious motives from professional charity. It does nothing of the kind. It cannot, for it makes no inquiry into motives. It simply abstains from providing any means either for their training or their exhibition. Secular associations do not undertake to discipline the souls of their members, nor to afford them any special opportunity of expressing their devotion to God as

the common Father or to Christ as the common Saviour of rich and poor alike; but they can no more hinder the expression of such feelings than they can hinder the growth of the soul. On the contrary they give all the scope which naturally belongs to charitable action for the expression of such feelings in deed as well as in word. They neither seek for nor value pain or humiliation as a means of proving devotion; on the contrary they avoid all that might injure health or distract attention or encourage spiritual vanity, as interruptions to the one main object, the good of the poor. Those who wish to see charitable associations organized upon a purely secular basis, wish it not only because they believe singleness of aim to be the first condition of perfect success; not only because the poor will probably be most effectually served by those who do it from pure love of them without thought of their own spiritual interests; not only because secular associations break none of the domestic and social ties which they believe to be divinely appointed, and full both of blessing and of power for all good ends; but also because they think that to provide an organization for the systematic cultivation and exhibition of love and devotion is to depart from Christian simplicity, and must tend in the long run to injure true humility, sincerity, and even the love and devotion themselves which are thus artificially stimulated. They think that the only service of love and devotion which God, who sees the heart, can demand, is that of right action, disregarding pain when necessary in the discharge of duty, gladly accepting all innocent pleasure, and freely expressing itself in the spontaneous and unheard utterances of the heart as it looks up to Him for strength and guidance in the daily work undertaken not to prove devotion, but out of the spirit of devotion, and in the path which appears to be pointed out by obedience to natural laws. They know also that the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and they believe that whatever good deeds are done are acceptable to Him whether the motive be a consciously religious one or not; and they would therefore not venture to exclude from Christian fellowship and association in good works those who may not choose

to adopt those religious formulæ which they might themselves prefer.

Such being the essential character of secular institutions as distinguished from religious associations of whatever denomination, it will be convenient before going further to inquire a little into the comparatively slight divergence between Catholic and Protestant sisterhoods. I say Catholic, not Roman Catholic, with the intention of including what are called Anglican sisterhoods.

I have shown that Catholic and Protestant sisterhoods alike regard works of charity as partaking of the character of acts of worship, and that they both tend more or less to exalt poverty at the expense of wealth, celibacy at the expense of marriage, dependence at the expense of independence, low and painful offices at the expense of important and painless ones. For, as I have already said, one set of conditions cannot possibly be exalted without relatively depreciating the opposite set of conditions. This exaltation may be defended on the ground either that they are really superior, or that it is necessary to exalt them artificially, that is to exaggerate their value, in order to correct a depraved tendency of human nature to exaggerate the value of the opposite conditions; but to say that they can be continually described as blessed, and holy, and beautiful, without at all depreciating by comparison the blessedness, holiness, and beauty of the opposite conditions, is to say that laudatory epithets have no meaning.

So far all sisterhoods, whether Catholic or Protestant, are alike in their tendency; but the degree of importance which they respectively attach to these things is very different; and there are other differences between Catholic and Protestant sisterhoods which, so far as I can judge, are just what might have been expected from the different character of the churches to which they belong, and from the fact that religious orders are indigenous in the Roman Catholic, and imported into other churches. Religious orders are a natural and intelligible result of a system which asserts the possession of delegated Divine authority by the priesthood, their competence to discipline the souls of those whom they direct, and the necessity of systematically renouncing and sacrificing the natural affections if

we would attain to spiritual perfection. In churches whose very existence is a protest against these views, where the spiritual authority of man over his fellow-creatures is renounced and defied, and the natural affections are regarded as the holiest and most powerful of all the means by which God Himself conducts the education of His creatures, religious orders are altogether out of place. In attempting to combine an organization borrowed from one system with the spirit of the opposite and protesting system, Protestant sisterhoods necessarily fall into inconsistencies which, if less pernicious in their results, are less excusable in their origin, than the Roman Catholic war against nature.

The difference between the forms which the system takes in Catholic and Protestant churches respectively appears, in short, to be the difference between a falsehood and an inconsistency. Protestant sisterhoods, so long as they are really Protestant, are no doubt free from the worst development of the doctrines whose appropriate forms they borrow from Catholicism; but what they gain in truth they lose in consistency. And inconsistency in a system means such a choice between confusion and insincerity as too often leads to actual dishonesty, whether conscious or unconscious, in those who adopt it. For instance, the asceticism, be it more or less, of the Catholic sisterhoods is avowed. The directors of charitable orders no doubt restrain discipline and self-mortification in order not to impair the active energies of their members, but they do not disguise their vows or their recognition of sacrifice and humility as ends. The Protestant sisterhoods, on the other hand, so far as I am acquainted with them, do not avow the degree of asceticism which they practise. We hear a good deal about the wide difference between themselves and the Roman Catholic orders on all these heads. According to their accounts of themselves they have nothing ascetic or conventual about them; their members are perfectly free from any obligation corresponding with the three monastic vows, and they do not at all interfere with domestic ties. Now I have already said with regard to the effect of the engagements which they take, and which they declare to be wholly distinct from the vows

taken by the Roman Catholic orders, that, while fully believing in the sincerity of their intentions, I am altogether unable to agree in the truth of this statement. It is the belief in the sacredness of the vocation, not the form of words, which makes the engagement binding; and, in like manner, it is the state of life, not the verbal teaching, which inevitably assumes a conventual character by its interference with wealth, marriage, and independence, and which tends more or less to foster an ascetic preference of whatever is painful and humble. It is easy to trace the influence of Roman Catholic models in the documents of Protestant sisterhoods; but I am not allowed to make extracts from the only rule of a Protestant sisterhood which I possess, that of Kaiserswerth, which, as the oldest of the Deaconess institutions, and the central mother-house at which the general conferences are held, must be taken as the most obvious representative of the whole system. I am therefore unable to justify this assertion by quotations, nor is it important to do so, for, as I have so many times said, it is not the words, but the system, which binds those who enter it by spiritual ties based upon the essentially Catholic doctrine of priestly authority and of special sanctity in certain conditions of life,—ties which therefore, according to Protestant theories, are purely artificial and fictitious. A fiction may be convenient for some purposes, but it is surely an expedient unworthy of churches whose very distinctive character is their determination to seek and assert truth, and to protest against unfounded claims to spiritual authority.

There are two evils peculiar to the practical compromise which Protestant sisterhoods have for the present succeeded in making between opposite systems. One is, that the element of exaggeration thus introduced into their view of life is the more misleading precisely because it is a less flagrant defiance of facts than the audacious statements of the Roman Catholic Church; and the other is, that it is difficult long to preserve any compromise from changing its character, and leaning more or less to one or the other of its inconsistent elements. In course of time all institutions are almost sure to vary from their original type, and the more complicated and inconsistent

their composition, the more certain and rapid is this variation. Protestant sisterhoods are already in some degree leavened by essentially Catholic ideas, and it is impossible to say how much further the same leaven may work. I have felt it a painful duty to differ in a somewhat serious manner from the view of their own position taken by the directors of the Deaconesses' Institution of Kaiserswerth, and therefore I am the more anxious, not only to acknowledge the kindness with which I was received there, and the cordiality with which I was allowed to see every part of the institution, but to express my deep and sincere admiration for the great man by whom that institution was founded, and for the manner in which, under the still evident influence of his noble spirit, it is at present conducted. But how long can we calculate upon preserving the impress of any one mind? what are forty years in the life of an institution? and who can measure the future development and results of the complicated system to which the very singleness of heart of the founder has given the strongest possible impulse? In estimating the merits of any system we have to consider the truth or falsehood of the theories it involves, not the elevation of the aims of its founders. If the principles upon which a system is founded be false, and therefore pernicious, the zeal and piety and every other good quality of those who support it become the most formidable engines for the promotion of error and mischief.

But by what standard are we to judge of the truth or falsehood of the theories in question? and is it our business to judge of their truth or falsehood at all, or merely to ascertain whether this or any other system be appointed by authority? Here we come to one of those fundamental differences of belief which for our present purpose must be regarded as irreconcilable, and to which I am endeavouring to trace our practical differences.

This divergence is obviously a double one: the first and by far the most important and fundamental difference of opinion being the difference between those who do and those who do not believe in the existence on earth of any infallible spiritual authority; the other being the difference between those who

attribute such spiritual authority to the Church and those who attribute it to the Bible. Neither of these positions is in reality quite so definite as it appears at first sight, nor do those who acknowledge either of these spiritual authorities in fact adhere quite consistently and exclusively to its sole guidance. The obvious impossibility of deciding in the absence of any authoritative interpretation what are the decisions of the Bible makes the position of those who profess to refer everything to it as to the oracles of God somewhat unintelligible to others if not to themselves. In reality some people use it merely to confirm, or at most to supply materials for, the conclusions of their own reason upon all spiritual subjects, in which case they are practically on the side of those who deny spiritual authority; while others appeal to it to support the spiritual authority of some particular persons or class of persons, and thus are practically on the side of those who recognize spiritual authority in the Church, though the meaning they attach to the word "church" may vary indefinitely. This last position is that of Protestant sisterhoods. Recognizing the Bible as the ultimate authority on matters of faith, they believe themselves to find in it some passages which command, or at least sanction, the institution of religious communities. In almost every case they also find in the Bible reasons binding the members of such communities to accept the spiritual authority of some ecclesiastical superior or adviser.

But neither is the position of those who refer everything to the Church as the one infallible guide to truth very intelligible, or very consistently maintained in practice. The various interpretations of the word "church," and the notoriously contradictory decisions given by those who claim to wield ecclesiastical authority, altogether deprive the Church, in the eyes of the outside world, of the character of a guide to truth, and reduce it to the position of a spiritual governor. Now it is of course quite conceivable that there might be such a thing as (if I may use the expression) sporadic spiritual authority, vested in any number of individuals or churches. But those who believe in any spiritual authority always refer it to Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church, and suppose it to be derived from Him

either by the Pope as His vicar, or by the clergy, however that body may be defined. Where the Pope's supremacy is not acknowledged, the belief in the authority of the clergy becomes practically a belief in sporadic spiritual authority, for the centre of unity is not to be found in this world. I see no more evidence for and no greater intrinsic probability in the one theory than the other, since successive centres of unity notoriously differ from each other quite as much as contemporary and independent spiritual authorities; but there is obviously great convenience in the hypothesis of a central authority for the time being, both to those who adopt and those who reject it. The absence of any one supreme authority, and of any written code common to all Protestant churches, makes it impossible to define the degree of authority claimed by their clergy. I shall not attempt to define it. I only wish to point out that those who acknowledge it to any extent take to that extent the same ground as the Roman Catholic Church, and the same arguments apply to them; while those who use the Bible to support the conclusions of their own reason take to that extent the same ground as those who deny the existence of any spiritual authority, and the same arguments apply to them. It is impossible to combine the advantages without combining the disadvantages of these two positions; and it is scarcely possible to reason with those who endeavour to combine positions which are logically so diametrically opposed. I can therefore only take account of those who frankly acknowledge or frankly deny the spiritual authority of the Church, however defined; avowing my own adhesion to those who deny it, and leaving it to time to range those who now hesitate between the two positions on one side or the other.

Whatever be the authority appealed to, and in whatever manner these different views may be combined, the bearing of belief in any spiritual authority, whether ecclesiastical or scriptural, upon the practical question before us is obvious. Of course, if we admit the spiritual authority of any church, we are bound to do whatever its regularly commissioned ministers may direct; and if we further believe that church to have sanctioned or commanded the institution of religious commu-

nities, any such inquiry as we are now engaged upon into their natural tendency to produce certain temporal or spiritual results, or any question as to the truth or falsehood of the view of life upon which they are founded, is altogether superfluous or profane. The same may be said of those who believe a complete system of ecclesiastical organization, or complete rules for our conduct in all the affairs of life, to be laid down in the Bible. I know that some of the supporters of the Deaconess system, for instance, consider it to be an institution apostolically ordained, and plainly enforced by Scripture as binding upon all Evangelical churches. Those who recognize the supreme authority of Scripture, or of scriptural precedents, upon all such matters, must of course regard such an argument as conclusive if well founded.

It would seem, indeed, as if those who believed in the existence of any infallible authority, whether ecclesiastical or scriptural, by which all such questions as we are engaged upon might be decided, would have no interest in any arguments which could be used upon either side of a question already decided by that authority; and that if it be possible to prove the competence of such spiritual authority, and the fact of its decision, it must be mere waste of time to prove anything else. Believers in spiritual authority, however, generally seem to find a satisfaction in seeing not only its existence but its decisions supported by reason. This is a compliment to reason which those who believe it to be the only test of truth have certainly no occasion to disclaim; but those who pay it must not forget that belief in any authoritative decision in favour of sisterhoods is practically disavowed by the mere use of argument. The system may be recommended upon the authority by which it is supposed to be instituted, or upon its own merits, but its supporters must choose between these two grounds, not because they contradict, but because they supersede, each other.

I shall not attempt to inquire into the grounds upon which spiritual authority is claimed either for the Church or the Bible, nor into the evidence as to their respective teaching upon this matter. The sanction given by the Church of Rome to the system of religious sisterhoods needs no proof; while the

process by which decisions upon such subjects are extracted from the Bible is one which almost eludes all reasoning. For my own part I can neither find any decision of the question in the Bible, nor acknowledge the binding force of apostolical precedents, nor even the competence of the Apostles themselves to lay down laws for all future ages. I believe it to be our duty in everything to judge for ourselves, by the light of reason, of experience, and of the teaching of those in whom we recognize more reason and more experience, or the possession of fuller information than we ourselves may possess, what is upon the whole the right course to pursue; but I recognize no such thing as the delegation of Divine authority to human beings in virtue of their ordination to any ecclesiastical offices, nor, while reverencing the Bible as containing the authentic record of the Christian revelation, do I believe in its infallibility. Putting aside the question of authority, there is however still room for considering whether religious sisterhoods, although not Divinely ordained, may not be well calculated to foster a true spirit of piety, and to promote spiritual objects by the use of appropriate means.

We are thus brought face to face with the final inquiry—the inquiry upon which in reality the whole matter eventually turns—whether the institution of sisterhoods does afford special opportunities of imparting spiritual benefits, and promoting the salvation of souls and the glory of God, by reason either of the internal constitution of those bodies, or of their external ministrations?

The one fatal obstacle to any present unanimity of opinion upon these questions consists in the difference of the meanings which different people attach to the expressions "salvation" and the "glory of God;" and of their theories respecting the nature of the means of grace. But this fatal obstacle to agreement is the chief help to that ranging of sympathies on their proper sides which is my great object in this inquiry. For different views of the value of religious associations follow naturally and necessarily from different views of the meaning of those expressions, when once the question is cleared from all minor issues, and from irrelevant appeals to those universal

feelings whose action tends rather to unite than to divide human beings, and whose introduction into this discussion so often effectually veils the main issue. When we know that the hungry can be fed, the naked clothed, the sick visited, and scope allowed for any amount of charitable and religious zeal, devotion, and heroism, by either kind of charitable association, we need no longer be biassed by pity or admiration in considering which of the two forms is most conducive to those spiritual interests which all religious people agree in recognizing as infinitely more important than any temporal necessities, but as to the right means of promoting which religious people differ, even to the point of downright opposition.

For it cannot be too emphatically asserted, it can scarcely be too often repeated, that the question at issue is not as to the value of religion or the importance of spiritual objects, but as to the tendency of a particular organization to promote them. Let us consider it with reference, first, to the internal organization of sisterhoods, and secondly to their external ministrations.

It will be remembered that at the outset of these inquiries I pointed out the existence of two theories about sisterhoods which are rarely clearly distinguished, and the confusion produced by the continual tendency to shift the argument from one ground to the other. I said that sisterhoods might be regarded as machinery, either for collecting together women who already possessed certain religious qualifications, or for imparting such religious qualifications to those who might not otherwise attain to them; in short, either as reservoirs, or as sources of holiness. For the purpose of estimating the value of sisterhoods as charitable machinery, I was then obliged to assume that the number of truly religious women at our disposal was practically limited. I gave some reasons for thinking that there was no such especial need for religion as a guarantee for fidelity in the service of the poor as compared with that of the rich or the public service generally, as would justify us upon that assumption in collecting large numbers of religious women into communities for merely charitable purposes, supposing it to be possible to do so. But sisterhoods exist not merely for charitable purposes, but also for the sake

of promoting religious objects of infinitely greater importance than any temporal benefits, and which, if they can really be thus attained, would no doubt justify measures which upon other grounds might be most undesirable. In this view therefore it becomes necessary to inquire into the means by which sisterhoods can be supposed to secure or to promote true religion in the women by whose ministrations it is to be eventually still further diffused.

This object may be sought either by fixing a certain standard of personal piety as a necessary qualification for admission to the community, or by the influences which are brought to bear upon the members when admitted.

The question of the religious qualification to be demanded on admission to a sisterhood, and the tests by which it may be ascertained, is one of vital importance, and upon which great vagueness of thought and language prevails in most of the discussions we hear upon this subject. Two different standards may be used in fixing it—one denominational, referring to external circumstances, the other experimental, referring to personal attainments. Both these qualifications are distinctly put forward as required among the conditions of admission to the Deaconess Institution at Kaiserswerth (see p. 110).

The denominational qualification has the merit of being perfectly definite and ascertainable. It is also indispensable as a condition of joint action for conferring spiritual benefits, though quite irrelevant to purely charitable action, or as a guarantee of personal piety. It is accordingly invariably a condition of admission to any sisterhood which can be properly so described. The fact that all sisterhoods are necessarily denominational associations is apt to be buried under their claim upon sympathy as charitable bodies; but unless we are prepared to assert that charity is confined to any one denomination, we must consider their denominational character, as a barrier to common action in works of charity, to be justified only upon the ground that denominational objects are more important than charitable ones. This justification would be perfectly intelligible, but it is not the one commonly put forward.

The experimental standard, on the other hand, would be

acknowledged by all religious people to be extremely valuable if it could be applied. But the difficulty of devising any test for ascertaining the existence of personal holiness would seem to be almost insuperable. The conditions of admission at Kaiserswerth just referred to endeavour to provide for it by requiring from each candidate a written account of her inward and outward experiences, and a sealed certificate from her pastor. Few people will seriously attach much value to professions of faith and experience, the readiness to make which is often in inverse proportion to real feeling, or to a certificate, which it would be so very difficult for any clergyman to refuse to a parishioner who wished for it. Practically of course the duty of judging of what Catholics call the "vocation" of applicants must devolve upon the directors of the institution, whose experience no doubt to a certain extent enables them to judge of religious character; but few Protestants would think such judgments conclusive.

But suppose the difficulty of devising any satisfactory test of personal piety to be surmounted, there remains the question at what precise point such a qualification ought to be fixed. If the object be to collect together for charitable purposes a number of truly religious women, it must of course be fixed at whatever degree of personal piety may be supposed sufficient to qualify them for the discharge of their charitable functions. If, on the other hand, the object be to establish a school for holiness, where all that is noble and devoted may be learnt from the example of those who are daily practising it, it will be impossible to refuse admission to those who are not already qualified to set such an example. The admission of imperfectly qualified candidates is a necessary condition of training in anything which can be called a school, whether the art to be taught be nursing or religion, or anything else. Probably few sisterhoods definitely set before themselves either of these objects exclusively. But in order to form any estimate of the religious character of such institutions, it is essential to inquire what is their practice in the matter of the qualification for admission. It seems scarcely possible that in the long run any standard but that of external, and therefore ascertainable, circumstances can be rigorously adhered to.

However this may be, the thing which it is most important to remark is that every society must necessarily choose between the incompatible advantages of strictness and freedom in the matter of admissions. It is obviously idle to imagine that the application of any test can reconcile great extension with a high standard of character at admission. No society can be at once very choice and very popular, and those who desire to see sisterhoods become popular, desire in fact the lowering of the standard of religious qualifications in those who join them, and therefore in the whole body, unless indeed they are prepared to assert that the discipline of the community is sufficiently powerful to counteract this natural process. For instance, I should imagine that it would be impossible to live at Kaiserswerth now without gaining some religious improvement from the example of many of the sisters. But I should also say, and for the same reasons, that the women now constituting that sisterhood are probably very picked members of the class from which they come. The same is probably true of the other Deaconess institutions, all of which are within forty years of their original establishment, and many of much later date. But the more saintly and elevated the character of the founders and the earlier members of any institution, the less likely is it that the state of feeling impressed by them on their companions can be kept up as the recollection of their presence fades away. There is also sure to be a certain degree of opposition to a new system, which supplies a natural test of strength of purpose in those who join it; and certainly there has been no lack of effort, as considerable effort was probably necessary, to bring together from all parts of Germany the women who seemed best qualified for the work, and whose religious zeal most strongly inclined them to devote themselves to it. While an institution is little known and comparatively unpopular, those who join it are probably impelled to do so by strong motives; but in proportion as you throw open the gates and make entrance easy, in that proportion you necessarily lower the standard of character implied in the mere fact of membership.

Whatever may be the difficulties attending the application of

any rigorous religious test as a condition of admission, there are however some important influences which religious communities can undoubtedly bring to bear upon their members when admitted. These are chiefly the influence of the corporate character of the society, and the contagious effect of sympathy in religious feeling, stimulated by the use of appropriate exercises and symbols.

Both these influences are notoriously powerful, but equally notoriously dangerous. The influence of mere *esprit de corps* appears to me to be a motive altogether unworthy to be brought to bear on religious fervour, and likely to do far more injury to sincerity than can be compensated by any increase of zeal. The corporate reputation of religious associations is reflected upon each of their members in such a way as may no doubt tend in some degree to make it fulfil itself by its action upon their own imagination; but there is scarcely a more fruitful cause of self-deception and prejudice than such reflected reputations. We have a familiar instance in the position of the clergy. Any zealous clergyman who accurately observes his own experience must be aware that zeal for the honour of his profession, and of the religion with which his profession is identified in the popular imagination, often complicates his view of his duty in such a manner as to make perfect candour and simplicity harder for him to maintain than they would be for a layman in similar circumstances. What is gained by the introduction of *esprit de corps* into sisterhoods in point of assertion and readiness of religious feeling appears to me to be fully balanced by the corresponding loss in simplicity.

The possibility and the danger of propagating religious feeling by means of sympathy and intentional stimulation are equally familiar. Everybody knows how contagious emotion is, especially religious emotion, and especially among women. The history of religious revivals sufficiently illustrates this, and at the same time supplies a grave warning of its unavoidable dangers. It appears to me that the very susceptibility of women who have any religious feeling at all to the stimulus of sympathetic emotion is a strong reason against collecting them

together into communities. Of course those who attach an independent value to religious emotion will come to a different conclusion, but even those who value it most highly will not assert that every increase of it is necessarily an unmixed benefit, nor deny the extreme danger of providing for its systematic stimulation. And those who value feeling not for its own sake, but for the sake of what it proceeds from, and as supplying the motive force of action, will agree that all emotion which is the result of mere volition or mere stimulus, and is not called out by appropriate facts, must be a waste of power. I do not of course mean to say that it is never right to dwell upon any fact which tends to produce emotion; but that to do that or anything else for the mere sake of producing emotion is to waste the very life of the soul; and that religious stimulants are as much more dangerous than physical stimulants, as the soul is more valuable than the body. The life of religious comunities may no doubt be so arranged as artificially to foster certain states of feeling, but I believe the practice is likely to be unwholesome, as it is certain to be dangerous, precisely in the degree in which it is successful.

It may be said, and it is of course true, that to show that a certain course of treatment is dangerous is not necessarily to condemn it; but no one will deny that the danger which it involves is a reason for very serious inquiry into the necessity for its use, and into the competence of the person who is to administer it. The whole subject of the manipulation of religious feeling is full of difficulties, and can scarcely be argued apart from the deeper question in what holiness or spiritual excellence consists. No one of course doubts that it is possible to strengthen particular religious feelings and habits of mind by systematic cultivation; but the wisdom of attempting to do so in the first place implies a belief in the competence of those who propose to undertake the task, and, secondly, depends upon the degree of value which we may attach to the attainment of a given definite attitude of mind or type of character. The belief that holiness consists in the attainment of a certain predetermined frame of mind seems to imply and naturally results from a belief in the Divine commission of the clergy to

undertake the care and direction of souls, and to define the nature of spiritual perfection. The practice of submitting to the systematic spiritual cultivation of religious communities at any rate implies a belief that the directors of those communities are competent to discipline the souls of the members. Those who do not share this belief must regard such submission and the spiritual abdication which it involves as dangerous and unworthy, however wisely or well spiritual directors may in any particular instance exercise the power attributed to them. Voluntary submission to wrongfully assumed authority is not justified by the moderation or the wisdom with which that authority may be exercised.

But a deeper objection to the system than arises from distrust of the competence of spiritual advisers, or even from a sense of the unworthiness of spiritual abdication, will be felt by those who disbelieve the whole theory respecting the nature of holiness upon which schools for training in it must be founded. The very notion of instituting schools for such an object implies a belief, which indeed is frankly enough avowed in the Roman Catholic Church, that spiritual perfection is an art to be acquired by the practice of certain ascertained and so to speak technical rules. To those who regard holiness or spiritual perfection not as a special art, nor as consisting in the attainment of a predetermined frame of mind, but merely as another name for the result, infinitely various in form, of the fullest possible development of the whole spiritual nature through the faithful discharge of duty and loyal acceptance of the teaching of life in all its various relations, the endeavour to establish schools for training in it will appear puerile in its inadequacy. They will see in it an instance of that perpetual tendency to localize and concentrate sanctity which belongs to ecclesiastical systems; and which in endeavouring specially to consecrate one part of life so fatally desecrates the rest; while it at the same time ignores, and thus weakens the force of, all natural and ordinary motives in the persons and actions supposed to be specially dedicated to God. They will feel also that any endeavour to mould feeling into predetermined forms is a presumptuous and scarcely honest wresting of the mind from that

open and simple attitude, in which alone it can receive and reflect back the full play of the living forces around it, the full sunshine of the face of Heaven. Those who believe that the only school for holiness is the experience of life, and the only Teacher of it the Júdge of all the earth, will regard the spiritual discipline of the best of human institutions as mere child's play, unless indeed it amounts to a serious interference with the natural discipline of life.

The belief that religious sisterhoods tend to promote the salvation of souls and the glory of God is perhaps, at least among Protestants, oftener entertained with reference to their external ministrations than to any spiritual advantages to be found in community life. In this case it depends partly upon the belief already alluded to, that there is such a special and necessary connection between the service of the poor and the salvation of souls as that those who spend their lives in the one are thereby necessarily promoting the other, and partly upon the obvious convenience of such organizations as machinery for promoting the use of the means of grace.

The objection to the first of these arguments in favour of religious sisterhoods is that it proves too much, for it must apply equally to all secular institutions for charitable purposes, unless the same actions change their character when performed under different names; so that for instance the attendance upon the sick, which when performed by paid nurses is called menial drudgery, when undertaken by Sisters of Charity becomes a work of mercy. This is of course the coarsest form of unreasoning prejudice, and needs only to be put into plain language to refute itself. It is however so seldom plainly stated that it is not altogether without influence upon popular feeling; and it is worth while to inquire a little into the way in which it acts in favour of sisterhoods.

The idea of a special connection between the service of the poor and the salvation of souls seems to have first arisen in the way already suggested, out of the desire to express personal devotion to Christ by rendering personal services of a kind which none but the poor are generally disposed to accept at the hand of strangers. The rich are, as a rule, sufficiently supplied with

personal attendants of their own choosing, but the poor are accessible to any visitors who may wish to use them as the instruments of their own worship. We have, I think, in this desire to render humble services of a personal nature the real key to the special devotion to the service of the poor practised by religious orders. It is curious to observe how the idea of special sanctity in certain employments is limited to the cases which involve personal attendance. I think we may safely say that no service, however useful, however laborious, and however gratuitous, which did not involve personal attendance would ever be regarded in the technical sense as a work of mercy. The poor are the natural objects of such works as being so much more readily accessible than the rich, but children and rich people when ill are supposed to be brought by their need of personal help within the circle of those to whom it is an act of piety to minister. This explains the apparent inconsistency by which, as already remarked, attendance upon the rich in case of sickness and the work of education in all classes are included among the objects of charitable sisterhoods; although it is no doubt partly prompted also by the special accessibility of children and the sick to spiritual influences, and the special need of spiritual help which is attributed to the dying, as will be more fully noticed hereafter.

The association between personal services rendered to the poor or the sick and the worship of Jesus Christ having thus naturally grown up, and being naturally cherished by all the feelings which lead pious women to desire to express the devotion they feel, has been further fixed by the express authority of the Roman Catholic Church, which formally recognizes almsgiving and attendance on the poor and the sick as good works, and stamps them as approved means of acquiring merit, and remission of penance, which may be applied according to elaborate rules to the benefit of one's own soul, or that of others, including the souls in purgatory. Protestants who renounce and despise these fables are by no means free from the influence of the theory upon which they are founded, and to which they owe whatever force they may possess. The belief that particular actions can be called good in themselves,

apart from any reasons for believing that they tend to promote the welfare of the human race, ought to be, but is not, confined to those who believe in the presence on earth of spiritual guides competent to command the performance of those actions. It is of no use to quarrel with those to whom the possession of spiritual authority is conceded for attaching their "spiritual favours" to the performance of any particular actions, however arbitrarily chosen; but those who deny the fact of the power of clerical directors so to attach a technical value to certain works, ought to estimate the value of actions by their general tendencies; and works undertaken in the service of the poor will then be considered good only in proportion as they really promote the most important interests of the poor and of others.

This consideration suggests the question whether we can suppose the poor to stand in greater need than the rich of any spiritual benefits which the organization of religious associations may enable them to transmit; whether, that is, the special connection between the salvation of souls and the service of the poor may consist not only in the technical value affixed by ecclesiastical authority to works done for the poor, but in the fact that spiritual assistance is peculiarly appropriate to the poor. This notion seems to mark the transition from the old and specially Catholic belief in the virtue of works of mercy technically so called as a means of acquiring merit, to the modern philanthropic sentiment which especially desires to promote material well-being, and naturally takes for its first object those whose material wants are the most obvious. It has all the inconsistency which belongs to an unconscious transition from one ground of action to a different and incompatible ground. It would seem to be strange doctrine for those who regard the poor as the special representatives of Christ, and poverty as a title to the favour of Heaven. If the poor are spiritually better off than the rich, we ought surely not to endeavour to deprive them of their privilege by lessening poverty. If on the contrary the poor are spiritually worse off than the rich, then the renunciation of wealth by religious orders is unjustifiable self-degradation. When plainly stated, the notion that pecuniary distinctions can affect the relation of human spirits to their

Maker is so profane that I should apologize for introducing it, if the whole theory of charitable religious orders were not to so great an extent founded upon a confused and even contradictory belief in it. We may now, however, dismiss it. For our purpose, and with all reverence I may say surely also for the glory of God, it matters not whether the spiritual benefits which religious communities may have power to impart be bestowed upon the souls of the rich or of the poor. What then are those spiritual benefits the diffusion of which is the principal aim of all religious associations for charitable purposes, and by what means are they to be conveyed?

The spiritual benefits which religious bodies endeavour to diffuse are chiefly such as may be supposed to follow from the administration of certain rites, and the promulgation of certain doctrines; and the means by which the administration of those rites and the promulgation of those doctrines are to be secured is the influence acquired by women in the exercise of charitable ministrations. In estimating the tendency of such an organization to promote the salvation of souls, we come to a double divergence like that already spoken of in the matter of spiritual authority, first between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant theories, and secondly between what may perhaps be called the ecclesiastical and the secular theories, respecting means of grace and their connection with salvation.

Catholics and Protestants alike recognize both rites and doctrines as in some sense means of grace, but the value attached to them is so different in the two cases that we may fairly describe a belief in the efficacy of sacraments as characteristic of Catholic, and a belief in the efficacy of doctrines as characteristic of Protestant, theology. Individuals of either denomination no doubt combine these two beliefs in every possible variety of proportion, but the sacramentarian view is most strongly enforced by Catholics, and the doctrinal view by Protestants. But the divergence between the sacramentarian and the doctrinal views is far less deep than that which exists between what I have called the ecclesiastical and the secular theories. By the ecclesiastical view of means of grace, and their relation to salvation, I mean the belief that salvation is

a future contingency, dependent upon the fulfilment of some particular condition, whether it be the administration of a rite or assent to a doctrine, in this life. By the secular view I mean the belief that salvation is a spiritual state, to the formation of which rites and doctrines may in some degree contribute, but which they are wholly inadequate to ensure.

It is easy to see how the establishment of sisterhoods may be justified upon either of the views which I have ventured to describe as ecclesiastical. Those who believe that God has made the eternal welfare of His creatures dependent upon their administration to each other of any rites, may well believe in the usefulness of religious orders. They are machinery of the most powerful and flexible kind for obtaining access by means of the temporal ministrations of women to people whose doors would often be closed to the priest, and who, if rites can save them, may be saved against their will out of pure gratitude to the women who have done so much to solace their sufferings in poverty or sickness. The belief in the efficacy of sacraments is so manifestly founded not upon reason but upon authority that it would seem to be unnecessary to point out the absence of any natural or necessary connection between the administration of rites and the eternal welfare of souls, if the belief in it had not so long pervaded almost all Christian communities, and if it did not make so powerful an appeal to the natural tendency of weak faith to cling to tangible and mechanical means, more or less partaking of the nature of magical charms, for securing their safety in the unknown future beyond the grave. The adoption of Catholic forms of organization lends itself so naturally to the introduction of Catholic practices and doctrines, that those who regard a belief in the efficacy of sacraments as a superstition tending directly to counteract the existence and growth of a real and reasonable trust in God, can only say of the Protestants who unthinkingly endeavour to graft religious orders upon a rational church, God forgive them, for they know not what they do.

But the establishment of religious sisterhoods may be justified also upon the ground of a belief in the efficacy of doctrines as a condition of salvation. There is no doubt that the per-

sonal influence which women may acquire through charitable ministrations is a most powerful engine for the promulgation of any easily recognizable religious tenets which those women may hold. As missionaries in disguise Sisters of Charity can do perhaps as much in propagating particular forms of faith, and winning assent to particular doctrines, as the avowed teachers of those forms can do by any more direct efforts. It becomes, therefore, a matter of the utmost importance to inquire into the real value of such forms of faith and such assent to doctrines as Sisters of Charity can be trained to inculcate.

And here the danger of misunderstanding is so very great that I must once more repeat emphatically what I have already said over and over again; the question is not as to the value of true religion or the value of true faith, but as to the effect of employing a particular kind of machinery for promulgating them. It is not a question between belief and unbelief, but as to the necessity or possibility of reducing religious belief to a system of transferable tenets. All rational religion is, of course, founded upon the belief that there are facts relating to God's dealings with man upon which our conduct should be based, and upon our acceptance of which our salvation, whatever may be the meaning of that word, must more or less depend. And of all means of exercising spiritual influence, no doubt holiness of life and acts of Christian love are the strongest. But the use of this most powerful of all weapons belongs to good women as such, not as members of any ecclesiastical organization. The question we have to consider is how far the spiritual influence necessarily exercised by good women is increased or injured by their being systematically trained to act as spiritual teachers under cover of ministering to physical necessities.

I have just said that all rational religion depends upon the belief that there are facts relating to God's dealings with man upon the knowledge of which our spiritual welfare more or less depends. It is not necessary for our purpose to inquire what those facts are. Our business is to inquire into the attitude of mind which women engaged in works of charity ought to adopt with regard to them. A belief in their importance

leads by a perfectly legitimate inference to the conclusion that they ought to be made known as widely as possible. But before we can conclude that the existence of charitable sisterhoods is justified by their adaptation to spread the knowledge of those facts, we must have reason to believe, first, that the members of Sisterhoods know better than other people what those facts are, and, secondly, that charitable occupations afford a fit opportunity for inculcating them.

It is difficult to see what ground there is for believing the members of sisterhoods know better than other people what religious truth is, except upon the hypothesis that the clergy are the depositaries of it. But even upon that hypothesis it is obvious that if the members of a charitable sisterhood can be trained to impart religious truths, those truths, however ascertained, must be capable of being compressed into a few plain statements, such as can be learnt by a woman in the spare hours of a course of training in works of charity, and imparted by her in the spare minutes of her visits of charity. The utmost result which can be expected from any such systematic instruction in religious truth is to impart a knowledge of the bare outline which is commonly described as "the plan of salvation," to enforce a belief that the acceptance of that formula is necessary to salvation, and to stimulate the desire to obtain an assent to it from others. Those who believe that God has made the eternal welfare of His creatures to depend upon their assent to any such formula are as much justified in desiring to engraft sisterhoods upon Protestantism as those who believe salvation to depend upon rites are justified in organizing such associations for the purpose of securing their administration; but surely the one conception of God's dealings with man is almost as unworthy as the other.

And yet no one will venture to dispute that this is the practical as well as the logical result of the too common belief that error is sin, and that to doubt is to disobey. The intrinsic value attached by all ecclesiastical systems to certainty apart from truth necessarily leads them to regard assent to religious formulæ as a condition of salvation, and to conclude (as they naturally may from that premiss) that in teaching women to

hold with unhesitating certainty, and to use all their natural and charitable influence in impressing upon others, certain theological statements, they are promoting the salvation of souls and the glory of God. It is upon the relation of certainty to truth, and of both to salvation, that the ultimate divergence appears, at least among Protestants, between those who would promote and those who would oppose the growth of ecclesiastical organizations, however purified and however moderate in their type. The ultimate difference of belief according to which sisterhoods must be justified or condemned is the difference between those who assert, and those who deny, that there are certain ascertained doctrines, capable of being compressed into a formula, which are necessary to salvation, and which it is sinful to doubt.

I shall not venture to discuss the grounds upon which this belief is so commonly held in a more or less distinct form. I can only say, if it be so, we must bid farewell to all real freedom of mind and of soul. In that case our path is easy. Nothing is easier than to persuade women that they know that of which the wisest and best of men have found life too short to learn even the beginning. Women, especially religious women, are ready enough to feel a passionate conviction of the truth of statements of which they could not explain any of the terms; nay, of which they do not even know that the terms require or admit of explanation. Nothing is easier than to drive such women, through carelessness or indifference, or unnecessary hindrances to charitable usefulness in the world, to take refuge in communities where their ignorance is a merit, and where they are systematically encouraged and authorized to take upon themselves the office of teachers.

But if it be not so,—if it be true in religion as in all other things that certainty is to be looked for as the result of free inquiry, not to be cherished to the exclusion of it,—then surely our first duty to religious women is to encourage them bravely to avow to themselves and to others that ignorance of which they must be conscious in proportion to their honesty and their real cultivation. It is not because I think religious truth to be of little importance, but because I believe it to be of

paramount importance, that I would entreat women to guard against the premature assumption of certainty in religious matters. It is because I am sure that there are some things which cannot be shaken, that I welcome the removal of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made. It is because I am sure that God's dealings with us transcend the power of any human language to express them that I regard the attempt to tie up our religious belief into formulæ which must not be questioned as implying at once a want of faith in the eternity of truth, and an inadequate conception of the greatness of the subject. God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither can His dealings with us be circumscribed in any form of words, or completely grasped and transmitted from one human creature to another. Women often think that what they especially want is ecclesiastical protection and instruction; what I believe they especially want is patience and courage to stand alone if necessary, and to learn the lessons which God Himself, and He alone, can teach them through the experience of life, its natural relationships and its inevitable loneliness, its joys and its sorrows, its failures and its successes; and this heavenly discipline can never fail them or be insufficient for all their needs, if only they will bring to it the divinely imposed conditions of openness of mind, humility, and honesty; if only, instead of shrinking from contradiction and choosing their own teachers among those who will certainly confirm their preconceived opinions, they will recognize the fact that nothing but freedom of inquiry can secure truth, because by no other means can it be tested, and will have faith enough in their own religious belief to submit it to the correction of the widest attainable comparison and experience.

I know well that it requires courage to adopt and maintain this attitude of mind, especially in such times as these, when everything that is sacred and venerable is called in question, and when the beliefs to which women cling with the passionate sensitiveness of personal attachment are too often handled with a rude indifference by those to whom such inquiries cost less pain. But it is not for those who aspire to the honour of martyrdom to shrink from the mere pain which may be involved

in purifying their faith from its dross. And how can it be purified if we will not allow it to be touched? how is it possible to learn if we dare not question?

It would be idle to hide from ourselves the fact that there is a great and increasing difference between the attitude of mind with regard to religious belief which prevails among thinking men, and that which prevails among believing women. Shall we regard this fact as a reason for voluntarily widening the inevitable separation, or for using the difference in our respective points of view as a mutual help and corrective? Surely all unnecessary separation between those who see things from these different points of view will tend to make women more bigoted, and men more unbelieving; while the freest possible interchange of mind and experience, the utmost cultivation of moderation and candour on either side, must tend, and are urgently needed, to make women more rational, and men more religious.

Such doctrines as are taught in sisterhoods, we are sometimes told, must be true because they bring peace to the soul. No doubt they do so, but it is not the truth of the doctrine, but the force of conviction, which produces peace. Peace is found by earnest believers in the most contradictory doctrines, so long as they are held without disturbance; but no peace can be secure from the possibility of disturbance unless it is based upon truth instead of upon a mere sense of certainty. Impatience for the immediate enjoyment of peace tempts us to immure ourselves in the destructible fortress of bigotry, but a wise desire to secure permanent peace should lead us to come out into the full daylight of free inquiry, where nothing but truth can long stand firm. Peace of mind is a beautiful and a heavenly thing; but even peace of mind may become an idol, and there is perhaps no idol to which women bow down more passionately than to this. We cannot if we would preserve our idols from being broken; let us rather pray that God Himself will break them, and save us from finding peace anywhere but in Him, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom. In that free service we shall find the surest guide to such truth as we need. The experience of a life spent in honestly trying to do our duty will teach us

more than can be learnt from any ecclesiastical system, and it is strange if in these days it does not teach much that is incompatible with such systems. If ever there was a time when good women needed to be warned against sacrificing truth to peace, it is now when good men are so earnestly seeking truth above all things, at the price of peace, and even, in some cases, of religion itself. Women have naturally a more vivid sense of religion, a greater hold upon religious feeling, than men; and therefore, if they have more to suffer, they have less to lose, by submitting their most cherished convictions to the test of free inquiry. And is it not worth some loss even of peace of mind, of religious emotion, or of anything which can be lost in a good cause, if by taking our share in the battle for truth we may be a help rather than a hindrance to the men who must fight it, either with us or without us?

It may be said that it is not the part of women generally to test truth, but to accept it; that life is too short and most women far too ignorant for us all to investigate the truth of the doctrines by which we have to live and in the faith of which we must die. No doubt this is true; the greater part of every human being's beliefs must from the nature of the case be accepted at second hand, and we must all live and die and be saved, if at all, in spite of much ignorance and error. This is the very argument which I have been urging to dissuade those who are conscious of so much error and ignorance from assuming the position of teachers. For the difference between the position as regards doctrine of a Sister of Charity, and that of a religious woman who engages in works of charity without belonging to any ecclesiastical system, is just this: that the one is sent out as a representative of the Church to use her charitable influence as a spiritual teacher in inculcating a certain fixed formula; while the other is free to use any religious influence she may be conscious of possessing when fit opportunity offers, but is under no external obligation to seek for opportunities of doing so, and is pledged to no formula in expressing her convictions. The secular religious woman is not cut off from holding out a helping hand wherever she can, from giving a reason for the hope that is in her, or from thank-

fully proclaiming the deliverance which may have been wrought for her own soul. But she is free from any artificial enhancement of the awful temptation to pull out the mote from her brother's eye while her own is still darkened by a beam; free from any obligation to lead others when her own path may not be clear, or to profess herself a guide where she is really only a fellow-groper in the darkness. Because there are things which are hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes, does it follow that babes are our natural teachers, or that wisdom and prudence have nothing to do with religion? Because we must necessarily take a great deal on trust, because the very condition of faith is that it deals with things not seen, or seen only through a glass darkly, does it follow that truth is less important than certainty? Does it not on the contrary follow that God cannot require from all the knowledge of doctrines which He has not made accessible to all, unless we dare to attribute to Him conduct which in a human being we should describe as utterly unreasonable and cruel?

And, lastly, is not the notion that women may be trained to interpose at the last moments of life to snatch the dying from falling unprepared into the hands of an unpropitiated Deity, and that if we have not time to ascertain the truth we may at least escape punishment by hastily assuming an unfounded certainty before we die, a relic of heathenish want of trust in the God of truth and love? The assumed special need of the dying for spiritual assistance, and the special connection which is therefore supposed to exist between religion and nursing, depend upon the belief not only that assent to certain propositions is necessary to salvation, but further that that assent is available only in this world, and that upon our satisfying certain conditions, which human beings can be trained to bring about for each other in the shape either of rites or of doctrines, depends an irreversible doom for eternal good or eternal evil, to be averted by means of those conditions at any moment before death, but to be inevitably bestowed or executed upon us immediately after death. Those who hold this belief may well have recourse to any machinery, however injurious to our highest temporal interests, for promulgating

those rites or those doctrines. Those on the other hand who think that we are neither bound nor authorized thus to limit the time or the manner of God's judgments, and that we have no complete knowledge of the means by which He works in bestowing or withholding eternal life, seeing that His thoughts are not as our thoughts, and His ways are far above out of our sight, will be content to learn rather than to teach, to stand still and see the salvation of God rather than endeavour to interpose to bring it about. Those who believe that salvation is inseparable from if not identical with holiness, and that our sojourn on this earth is valuable, less as a chance of fleeing from the wrath to come than as a course of discipline administered by our Heavenly Father to prepare us for a closer communion with Himself, in whose presence is the fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore, will care less to organize systems for securing our salvation than to follow the providential indications afforded by our natural relationships, by Scriptural records, and by the standard of moral duty which is accepted by the best and wisest people of our time and country, and tested by the fullest attainable experience of life, as to the nature of that good and acceptable and perfect will of God, in harmony with which we believe our salvation to consist. Instead of looking for the means of salvation in the administration of rites, or the promulgation of doctrines, we shall thus give up our whole hearts and so spend our whole lives as to learn what is the meaning of salvation, through the manifold and boundless teaching of life, which is the voice of God.

THE END.

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